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## Introducing the U.S.S.R.

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A SHORT account of Soviet Russia, designed to give some knowledge and understanding of the Russian people and their country. The author is widely known as an authority on Soviet Russia, has travelled there extensively, and has studied its people, their history and their problems. While very sympathetic towards and appreciative of Soviet aims and achievements, the author stresses the fact that these are designed to meet Russian conditions.

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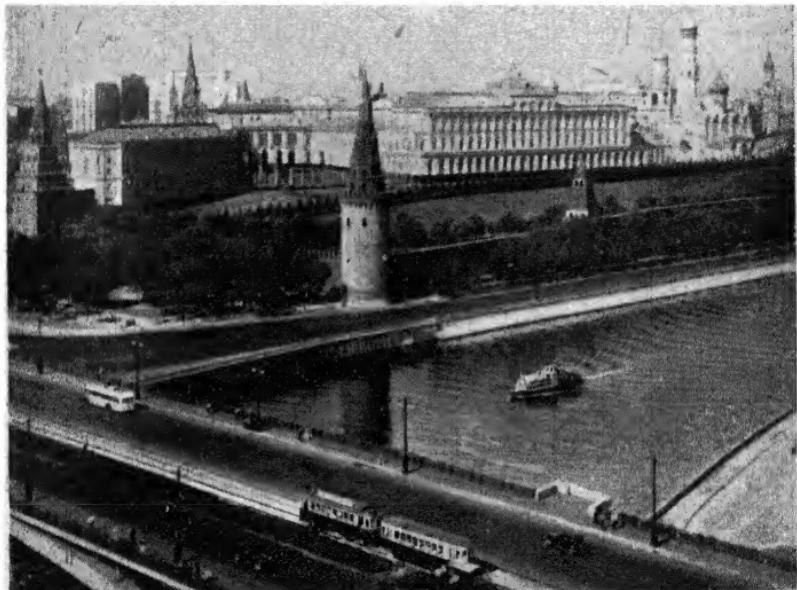
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*Frontispiece*

### THE KREMLIN

Seen from the Kammenny Bridge, across the Moscow River. In the foreground are the Government Buildings. To the right are the beautiful churches, now museums.

INTRODUCING  
*THE*  
U.S.S.R.

*By*  
BEATRICE KING

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**THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN  
COMPLETE CONFORMITY WITH  
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STANDARDS**

*Sketch Map showing European Russia -- (Political) --*



This map shows boundaries as in the spring of 1945.

*Sketch Map of the U.S.S.R.  
—Political—*

Union Republics  
Autonomous Republics  
International Frontiers



This map shows boundaries as in early 1945, without post-war adjustments.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE RUSSIANS BEFORE 1918

#### WHO THE RUSSIANS ARE

**N**O ONE has yet discovered whence and when the vast Slav family of peoples settled in the great European plain. It is known that they extended to the Carpathians, and stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

In early times, one branch of this Slav family had been settled along the Dnieper, the Don, and the Volga rivers for some centuries.

In the ninth century A.D. there came down these rivers, Varangian adventurers from beyond the Baltic Sea, from Norway, Sweden, and Jutland. After crossing the Baltic, they spread out into the interior from Novgorod, in the north, to Kiev, far in the south. They went in search of furs, skins, honey and wax, and other eastern products that were to be had in the great fairs held from time to time in these ancient cities.

One theory says that the word *Russia* is derived from *Rus*, which was the name that was given to the Vikings by the Finns.

These raiders in time settled along the trade routes, as their relations the Vikings did in Britain. They inter-married with the Slavs already living there, and were gradually absorbed by them. They provided rulers for the principalities (small states ruled by princes) such as Kiev. One of these early princes of Kiev, Vladimir the Great, adopted Christianity for himself first and then for the country. In 988 he had all the heathen images destroyed and forced whole multitudes of people to be baptized at the same time by being immersed in the Dnieper.

The Greek priests, who were invited by Vladimir from Byzantium, the centre of the Greek Orthodox Church, brought with them Greek culture, education, and many crafts. It was at this time that the first written records of Russian history appeared—the Annals, written by the Greek priests. They

were followed, in the reign of Yaroslav, the next prince of Kiev, by the first code of laws, called "Russkaya Pravda," or Russian Law (1028).

As the princes and nobles became stronger, their desire for power grew, and they seized the land on which the free peasants lived and then forced the peasants to work for them. This was the beginning of serfdom in Russia. The peasants, or *smerds* as they were called, rebelled from time to time, but their revolts were always quelled by the greater force of their owners.

One of these princes who dealt more humanely with the rebellious peasants and craftsmen after defeating them was Prince Vladimir Monomakh, the grandson of the Emperor Constantine. He was well known in Byzantium and in Europe. His sister was married to the German Emperor, and his wife was Cytha, a daughter of the Saxon King Harold of England.

In the twelfth century Kiev gave place to Novgorod as the leading principality. Novgorod's princes engaged in successful wars against the Swedes and Germans, and as a result their territory was extended. By this time, the end of the twelfth century, England was unified under one king. But in Russia every prince and every boyar, or landowning noble, still tried to be independent, refusing to acknowledge any one prince as overlord. Thus when, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Tatar Mongols, under their able leader Genghiz Khan, swept over Asia and into Russia, there was no strong united force to oppose them. Genghiz Khan was followed by Batu Khan, his grandson, who extended his conquests beyond Kiev. He marched right into western Europe, as far as Hungary. The Mongols burned and destroyed the Russian cities and took some of the people off as slaves ; then they levied tribute on those they left behind.

Towards the fourteenth century, Moscow, which the Tatar Mongols had burned down but which had now been rebuilt, became particularly strong under Prince Ivan, nicknamed Kalita, or Money-bag. By means of bribery and skilful diplomacy, he succeeded in gaining favour with the Tatar

overlord, the Khan of the "Golden Horde" as the Tatars were called. By scheming and treachery he became rich and powerful and was given the title of the Grand Prince. Kalita's descendants carried on the task of freeing Russia, and his grandson Dmitry actually defeated the Golden Horde. Though the Tatars again captured Moscow two years later, their power had declined. Then Ivan III, a wise and farseeing ruler, finally defeated the Tatars, under their leader Tamerlaine. Many of them, however, remained in Russia and became absorbed by the Russians, rather as earlier Normans were absorbed by the English.

It was not till 1480 that the Tatar yoke, which the Russians had borne for 200 years, was finally thrown off. Proud of his military success, rich and powerful, Ivan took the title of Tsar, the Russian form of Caesar. It was in Ivan's reign that Italian craftsmen were invited to build a beautiful Moscow, and that the arts began to develop.

Gradually the Tsars extended their rule over much of Central European Russia, and in the reign of Ivan IV (1533-84), grandson of Ivan III, they extended their territories beyond the Urals into Asia.

It was during the reign of Ivan IV that Richard Chancellor, an English sailor, paid a visit to Moscow as the representative of the English King, Edward VI, and so established the beginnings of European trade with Russia, through the port of Archangel on the White Sea. This Tsar is usually known as "Ivan the Terrible," because of his severity towards the great nobles and landowners who refused to acknowledge him as their head. His great achievement was in uniting all the separate principalities into a powerful state, which was able not only to repel enemies, but also to ensure peace for development.

Modern Soviet historians recognize Ivan IV as a great and farseeing ruler. Most of his reign was devoted to the building up of the Russian state in face of great opposition from his nobles. The severity and cruelty that he used were the common practice of that time.

## PEASANTS

While the power of Ivan increased, the lot of the peasants grew steadily worse. The nobles and landlords, who had to submit to a Prince, or Tsar, in their turn forced the peasants to submit to them.

After the death of Ivan's successor in 1598, the family of the original Viking rulers of Moscow came to an end. For fifteen years there was appalling civil war, from which the peasants suffered more than anyone.

For many years the Poles had been trying to obtain power in Russia. Now their intrigues succeeded, and they occupied Moscow at the invitation of some of the Russian nobles and merchants who for a time acknowledged the Polish King as Tsar of Russia.

At this desperate moment, the Russian people, under a peasant leader, Ivan Bolotnikov, rose, first to throw off their own oppressors, and then to defeat the foreign enemy. At the gates of Moscow Bolotnikov was betrayed by the land-owners, who feared a peasants' victory. His army was defeated by the Poles with the support of the Boyars and merchants. The Boyars who took him prisoner put out his eyes and then drowned him. But many of the nobles realized that the Poles intended to deprive them of their land and trade. Many united to continue the struggle against the Poles under the leadership of a Novgorod meat merchant named Minin and a prince named Pozharsky. They were finally defeated by these two who have become great national heroes.

After victory a new Tsar was chosen by the nobles in the presence of the people. They elected Michael Romanov, a youth of sixteen, the son of the Patriarch (a high church dignitary). This youth had taken a leading part in rallying the people against the invaders. Michael's reign began in 1613, and this family ruled Russia uninterruptedly until 1917.

Under the first Romanovs Russia greatly increased its power and developed trade and crafts, but the lot of the poor peasants and craftsmen became harder. There was a rebellion in Moscow. Other towns followed suit, but the rebellions were

crushed. Now, by 1649 the peasant was completely enslaved. He might not run away ; he could be bought and sold ; the laws against him became stricter. As the empire grew and conditions for the serfs and craftsmen became worse, while the numbers and riches of the merchants and landowners increased, there were more rebellions. A famous one was that led by Stenka Razin, a Cossack hero and the Russian Robin Hood. This too failed, for the people were weak and disunited. Many of the Cossacks migrated to new lands, even as far as Siberia, where they developed successful farms, and in their turn became rich farmers.

At the very end of the seventeenth century, in 1689, Peter I succeeded to the throne. He was filled with a burning desire to make his country progressive. He set himself the great task of turning Russia into a European state. Peter was a giant of a man, with an immensely strong will. To learn how the people of Western states lived, he went abroad in disguise, and worked for a time as a common workman in the shipyards of Amsterdam and of Deptford in London. His energy was boundless and his interests without limit. He learned everything that Western Europe could teach him. On his return to Russia he brought with him skilled workmen, doctors, and military advisers, and he tried to change the whole of Russian life, not slowly, stage by stage, but swiftly, in a few years.

Among the greatest of his achievements was the building, on a marshy swamp, of St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), for long the capital of Russia. Piles had to be driven into the marshes to form a foundation, and hundreds of peasants forced to this labour lost their lives. Peter did great work in



PETER THE GREAT

setting up compulsory schools for the young nobles. Most of the latter part of Peter's reign was spent in wars against the Swedes and the Turks, in order to give Russia an outlet to the Baltic and the Black Sea. At first he was often defeated, both by the Turks and by the Swedes under his great Swedish rival Charles XII. But Peter's love for his country, his belief in its future, united to his great courage and intelligence, helped to train good and brave fighters who caught his enthusiasm. His unlimited energy and skill in making use of Russia's vast resources at last brought success. Charles XII was defeated and Russia firmly established as a great European power.

As with other Tsars, so it was with Peter : while the Empire increased in riches and power, the lives of the common people in the newly conquered lands and in old Russia improved little. Again there were peasants' revolts and again they were crushed. The landowners took advantage of this to introduce even more stringent regulations against the peasants. The reforms and improvements introduced by later Tsars hardly affected the poorer peasants. The owners could do what they pleased with them. While there were many owners who were kind and considerate, some who sometimes sent their serfs to study or allowed them to train as musicians and actors and artists, the majority were cruel and brutal.

The peasants who fought for better conditions and for freedom were later supported by members of other classes, including young army officers and some aristocrats. Many landowners, learning from Western Europe, were coming to the conclusion that free men worked better than slaves. Industry, which was very backward, could not develop—there were not enough industrial workers. The serfs could leave and go to work in the towns only if their owners gave permission.

#### FREEING THE SERFS

It was these new ideas and new needs of the country, as well as the rising discontent of the peasants, that caused Alexander II to free the serfs in 1861.

Unfortunately, they were then given less land than they had been allowed to work for their own use as serfs. Further, the land that was given them was always the worst. In addition, the peasants had to pay to the owners a very high price for this land. For over forty years peasants were paying off for their land. The only result of the emancipation was to make the mass of the poor peasants even worse off as free men than as serfs, and to allow a small number of ambitious peasants to become comparatively rich farmers. It gave the better-off peasants a chance to become richer by lending money at very high rates of interest to the poor peasants. A great many freed serfs had no land at all and had to live by hiring out their labour to their former masters, or to the well-to-do peasants.

The cause of the peasants was taken up by many educated people, but their efforts led to no real improvement. The peasants needed land and knowledge, and modern implements to work the land. All these were withheld from them. Visitors to the Russia of that period—the end of the nineteenth century—describe as appalling the conditions of life in the villages, with dirt and disease widespread. In most villages there were no schools. In larger villages children went to school for two or three years. It was in rare cases that village children had an opportunity of secondary education.

### INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

Industrial workers, the descendants of the early craftsmen, were even worse off than the peasants, for poverty is generally harder in the city than in the country. Their wages were low, their hours long, and their living conditions inhuman. No trade unions were allowed. Overseers would go round factories with whips. The knowledge, the science, and the culture that had grown up in Russia were kept away from the mass of the people. The Zemstvos (municipal councils) did their best to improve life but were hindered by reactionary officials.

It was no wonder, then, that these workers listened eagerly to the talk of people who told them how to unite to overthrow

the Tsars and gain freedom. There were many who gave themselves to serve the people, trying to teach the workers and the peasants, the best known men among these being Lenin and Stalin. But it all had to be done secretly. There was no freedom of speech, no freedom to meet and discuss. There was no Parliament through which the people could make their wishes known. When those who tried to teach the people how to unite and make their country democratic were discovered, they were imprisoned, or exiled to Siberia or abroad. Often they were hanged or shot. Spies were everywhere, ready to denounce anybody who expressed liberal views.

It was not surprising, therefore, that after the Russo-Japanese war (1904), in which Russia was defeated, when conditions became worse, there should be a wave of strikes, although the strikers knew that the military would be called out to shoot them down. On 10th January, 1905, a vast procession, 140,000 starving and downtrodden men, women and children, marched for miles in the cold Russian winter to present a petition to the Tsar asking for some improvement. When the procession arrived outside the Tsar's palace in St. Petersburg, it is said that the Tsar lost his head and gave the order for the cavalry to fire. Hundreds of men, women and children were shot down. Others were taken off to prison or sent into exile. This made the workers very angry and strikes broke out all over the country, which ended in the revolution of 1905. The revolution was crushed. Again thousands of people lost their lives ; thousands were exiled. But the Tsar, Nicholas II, was frightened into giving the people a parliament, or Duma. He also permitted Boy Scouts to be organized ; they had not been allowed before, as they were said to be "revolutionary." Many people believed that at last Russia would become a democratic country. There were schemes for universal education and other reforms. All these schemes and hopes came to nothing, for Nicholas II had no intention of being a constitutional monarch. He believed in autocracy. He almost believed that he was appointed by God himself.

Very soon it was easy to see that all the reforms were a sham. Again discontent grew. So did strikes. Then, in 1914, the first World War broke out. Russia was quite unprepared. The government was utterly corrupt. Soldiers went to the front with paper-soled boots, and neither rifles nor ammunition. By 1916 many of them began to leave the front for home. The sailors, too, were rebelling openly. In fact, everybody, including members of the Tsar's family, was saying "the Tsar must go." He did go, as a result of a revolution in February 1917. His abdication was hailed with satisfaction by the whole country. The exiles, Lenin among them, returned home ; though he for a time had to go into hiding.

A Provisional Government was appointed until proper elections could be held, through which the will of the people could be expressed. However, peasants, workers, soldiers and sailors began setting up their own Soviets, or councils. They held central meetings of these Soviets, called Congresses. At the local Soviets and at the central ones, they stated in clear and forceful language that they wanted peace, and bread, and, of course, land for the peasants. The Provisional Government, under Kerensky, gave little heed to these demands, for it was busy attempting to continue the fighting on the Russo-German front.

The reforms it introduced were not radical enough for these Soviets. When it became obvious that Kerensky's Government did not intend to make any serious changes, the people decided that they must have a different Government, one that would give them peace and land and bread. Again there were uprisings. The Provisional Government was overthrown. This time it was Kerensky who had to go into hiding. Lenin, on whose head Kerensky had set a price, came out of hiding and became the head of the new government. This uprising is known as the October Revolution. Lenin's government became known as the Bolshevik government.

*Bolshevik* comes from the Russian word *Bolshinstvo*, which means *majority*. During his exile, at a conference of Russian revolutionaries held in London, Lenin had put forward certain

proposals for the organization of a revolutionary party. He was violently opposed by some members. A vote was taken, showing Lenin and his followers to be in the majority. Hence the term Bolshevik. The minority became the Menshevik Party, from the Russian word *Menshinstvo*—minority. They were always violently opposed to Lenin's party.

The next few years was a period of great suffering, hardship, and struggle. Civil war broke out and soon matters were made worse by the intervention of most of the countries of the world against the Bolsheviks. There were many different parties among the revolutionaries and they schemed and fought against each other. Many of them were opposed to Lenin's ideas and methods for restoring the country and developing socialism. The well-to-do peasants, too, were very hostile. Many of the early measures, such as compulsory requisitioning of grain from the peasants, were a real, if unavoidable, hardship for them ; for they could buy little if anything with the money they obtained.

The Bolshevik Party set out to win over the support of the people along two lines. One was education. There were education trains which used to travel all over the country and from these trains supporters of the Bolshevik government talked and explained to the peasants. The industrial workers, comparatively small in number, had been won over even before the October Revolution. Restoration of industry was the second line. Enthusiastic, public-spirited people worked long hours, sometimes as many as 16 or 18 a day, on little food, in order to get the factories working and trains running. The Russians worked in the same way again after Germany's attack in 1941. This time, however, the country had an advanced industry, a well developed agriculture, and a great many skilled and highly trained workers and specialists. The burden therefore was not nearly as great as in 1918, especially when aid began to arrive from Britain and the U.S.A.

The turning-point in Soviet life was 1932, when the First Five Year Plan was fulfilled, and the Soviet Union began its forward march.

**LENIN**

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, whose real name was Ulyanov\*, was born in a small country town, Simbirsk, where his father was an inspector of schools. He heard from his father about the shocking conditions in the village schools and the poverty of the peasants. Influenced by his elder brother, he became interested in politics as a youngster. He was a first-class scholar and was awarded a Gold Medal on finishing the secondary school. For taking part in student meetings, he was expelled from Kazan University, arrested, and deported to a distant village.

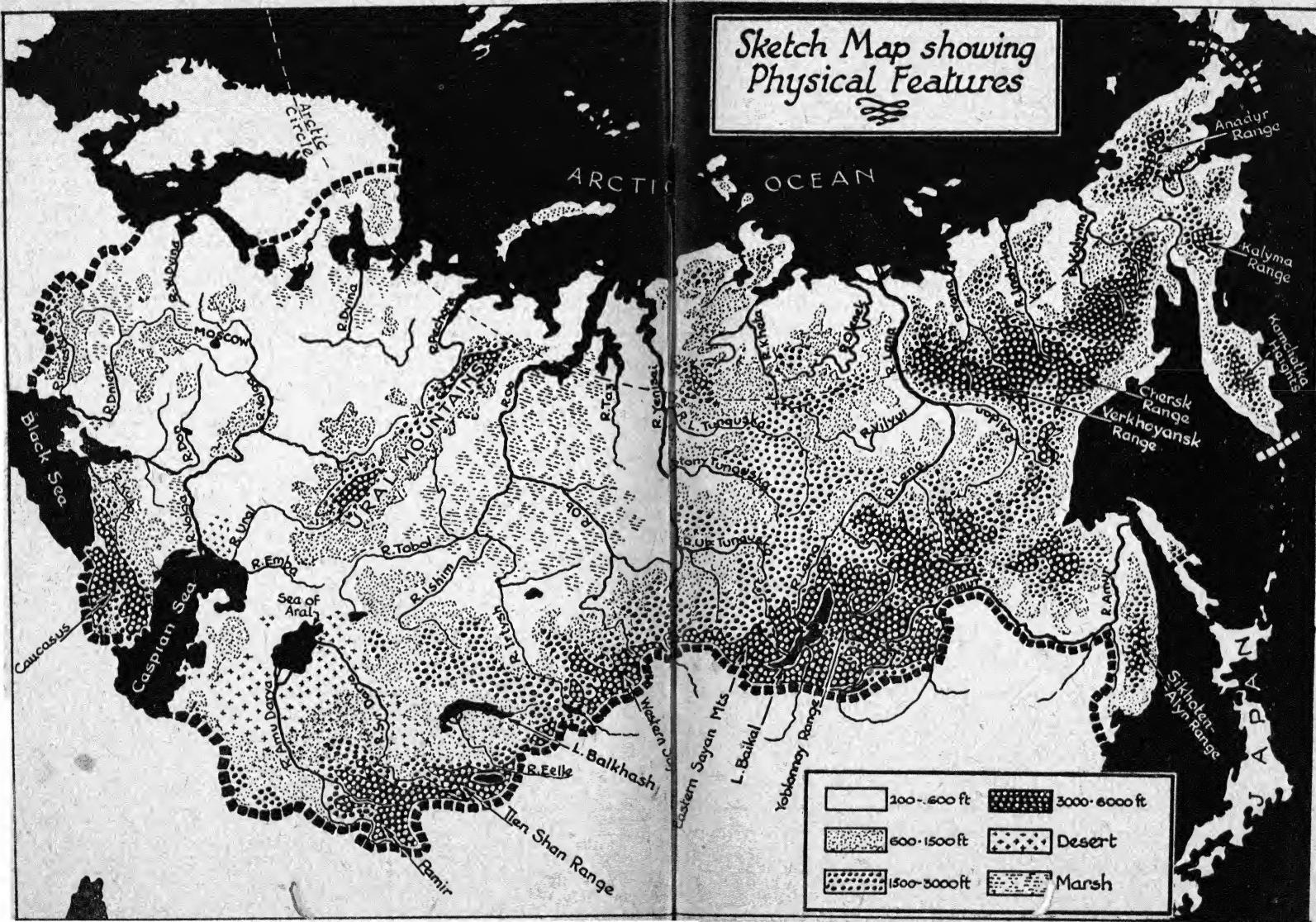
This was the first stage of Lenin's political life. He became convinced that under Russian conditions there was only one way to obtain freedom and democracy, and that was by rousing the people to make a united stand against the Tsar. From then on he spent his life teaching and explaining to the workers, writing and working out plans for a free Russia. Exiled many times, he lived for some years on the Continent and in London. He developed the theories of Karl Marx, and on these theories his practical revolutionary work was based. His wife, Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya, helped him throughout their married life. Lenin was the simplest and friendliest of people. He loved children and they in turn loved him and the noisy games he played with them. Nadezhda Krupskaya, with whom I had the privilege of having long discussions, shared with her husband his love of young people, and gave up the latter years of her life to them.

Lenin is the founder of the Soviet State, for to him is due the special organization of the Bolshevik Party, which won the country for Soviet ideas.

**STALIN**

Stalin always calls himself the pupil of Lenin. He is a very brilliant pupil who developed his teacher's ideas and work, so

\* Most of the famous people who worked for the overthrow of the autocracy of the Tsars had to take other names to save themselves from the police.



that the Soviet Union, from a poor weak state, has grown to a mighty power. Stalin is the son of a cobbler who lived in Georgia. Like Lenin, he too became interested in the terrible conditions in which the workers lived. His mother wished him to become a priest and sent him to school, but he was expelled for bringing modern scientific books into the school.

Stalin, too, chose the life of a revolutionary. He remained in Russia, working underground,\* hunted continuously by the police and spies. He had many hairbreadth escapes, and he assumed many names. He was exiled and imprisoned many times and each time he escaped. Once, in the bitter Siberian winter, when he was almost dying of consumption, he trekked for days to escape his pursuers. The icy cold killed the consumption germs and would also have killed him if a friendly peasant had not come to his help with country remedies.

Stalin is a man of many gifts. He is a great soldier. He won a great victory in 1918 at Stalingrad, then known as Tsarytsin. The creation of the Red Army in its present strength is due to Stalin. He has a great organizing brain. While Lenin put forward the ideas and the theory for industrialization and collectivization of agriculture, Stalin carried the plans through. He is very interested in history and has given great help to Soviet historians. Like Lenin he is a very simple and kindly person. A peasant, after an interview with him, came away saying in Russian : “*On takoi dobryak*”—“He is so full of human kindness.”

Foreign visitors and friendly diplomats tell us that Stalin is a man of great charm. But he is also the man of steel his name indicates. Nothing will stop him treading a road that he thinks will help the people. When people make mistakes he forgives them, but puts them in a position where they cannot repeat the mistakes. But he does not forgive deliberate treachery. He is like a surgeon, who, when it is necessary for the patient’s health, will perform an operation without hesitation.

\* Working in secret, like many of the people in Europe under Hitler’s terror.

## CHAPTER TWO

### INTRODUCING THE SOVIET CITIZEN

THE Soviet Union is a long way from Britain, and it is not easy to get a clear picture in our minds of people who live very far away from us. We hear a great deal to-day about the Red Army, about the great industries of Russia, the vast farms, and the miles of forests. We hear much less of the people as ordinary citizens going about their daily business at home or at work ; reading the newspaper over breakfast ; catching trains or buses ; doing shopping ; cooking the dinner and tidying the house. All these things, the simple everyday acts, are done by the Soviet citizen as by the citizen of any other country. So on looking back to one of my earliest visits, it is a simple incident that I remember.

Crossing the courtyard round which were built a block of flats, I saw a man chasing a little girl. Thinking there was something wrong, I went up and said in Russian, "What's the matter ?"

"Nothing," replied the man, "we're playing touch ; we always do before she goes to bed."

Since then I have always thought of the U.S.S.R. not only as a country that has giant industries and giant farms, not only as a country where men and women perform great and heroic deeds, but also as the home of people doing simple things, done by ordinary people, everywhere, and where fathers play touch with their little girls before bedtime.

In 1932, when toys and dolls were still almost unobtainable, as they were in England in wartime, a Russian friend of mine spent hours going round Moscow streets trying to find a doll for her little girl.

Another picture I have of the U.S.S.R. is of a summer's day along the banks of the Moskva River, some fifteen miles or so from the city : family groups arguing about how to spend the day ; mothers and aunts sitting guard over the food and kettle and spirit stove, knitting socks or vests, and giving orders to fathers ; fathers off with the youngsters on adventures up the

river; older boys and girls off on nature or scouting expeditions, and mild-looking individuals having fierce arguments about gardening.

Another memory is of a birthday party, very much like birthday parties in Britain, even to the cake with the candles.

These are the ordinary, home-like things, similar to those in our own home life, which go to make up the life of the Soviet people. This is the important thing to understand in being introduced to the Soviet citizen, that he is a person not unlike ourselves, with home life and family ties that mean to him what ours do to us ; that he is a real person, who eats and sleeps, works and plays, as we do, though he lives in a distant and vast country that is in many ways different from our own.

Their country differs from ours in its geography as well as in its history. It is a vast land mass, one-sixth of the world's surface. It takes nine days, travelling express, to go from Moscow to Vladivostock, the Pacific port. Were the reader to fly from the northern boundary to the southern, he would begin on the Arctic coast and fly over frozen wastes called tundra. Leaving these behind, he would pass over hundreds of miles of dense forest called taiga, then on to the great grain belt, a vast plain, merging into grasslands known as steppes. On and on he would fly, and as he came to the sub-tropical lands he would see vineyards beneath him. Then, crossing the Caucasian Range, he would see tea and tobacco plantations, vast melon fields, cotton and rice fields, and, down on the coast of the Caspian Sea, palm trees and other tropical vegetation.

On his way the traveller would notice mighty rivers, the Lena flowing into the Arctic, the Don into the Black Sea, the Volga into the Caspian Sea.

If the plane turned a little east from the Caucasus, it might take the traveller to the mighty Tien Shan Range and the Pamir Plateau. The U.S.S.R. is a country that has all its features on the grand scale. Everything is vast. It is therefore natural for the people to use adjectives that express this vast-

ness, to think in superlatives, somewhat as our other allies the Americans do.

But we must not limit ourselves to making acquaintance with Russians only, although theirs is by far the largest of the many nationalities of the U.S.S.R.—they number about 100 million. In the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics there are 150 different nationalities, and we should not have to leave



A YOUNG SOVIET CITIZEN FROM ARMENIA

Moscow to meet people of most of them ; for in the universities and in the Theatre Schools for Eastern Nationalities there are students from every part of the land training to become specialists in science, in art, in music, in the administration of their own countries.

Let me introduce you to a young Armenian teacher, Darya by name. Her country is a bridge between Europe and Asia. Ancient peasants will show you on Mount Ararat the spot where they say Noah's Ark rested. Her nation dates back thousands of years, before the Saxons or Britons or Assyrians. Because Armenia is a bridge between Europe and Asia, conquering nations crossed it back and forth, plundering, looting, killing and oppressing the people, on their way to conquer new lands.

When Armenia became part of the U.S.S.R. the Russians helped her people to use the freedom they had gained. Then they began to develop their industry and agriculture, their art and music, and literature, some of which is very old.

Darya is just twenty-one, and a member of the Komsomol.\* She and several teachers from the Ukraine are in Moscow on holiday. Because they had done very good work in their schools the previous year their Authorities gave them a fortnight's holiday in Moscow with air travel, first-class hotel, theatres, and all other expenses paid. Darya is slim, tallish, with an oval face, in which brilliantly black eyes flash. Her hair is deep black, and straight. She is full of life and gusto. She is thrilled to meet someone from England, and she will ask you to teach her some English phrases straight away, and what she will ask are the universal human phrases. She has great plans for her school, the finest in her town.

In Uzbekistan, the country with vast cotton fields, we meet Djhambul.† No one really knows how old he is. If you ask him, he replies, in the poetic way many Eastern people talk : " Old ? Why, since the day our wonder leader Lenin and our eagle Stalin have turned the sun to shine on our country, I have grown younger. Now I am young."

He is what is called an Asling, a travelling bard. As he goes from village to village, from one Chai-Khana† to another, he sings to his own accompaniment on a stringed instrument the songs he composes. Sometimes instead of singing he recites his own poems, which may be about the great leaders of the people, about the building of a dam or a power-plant, or about the happiness of the young people. Sometimes he sings or recites about the past. He wears the native costume of his country as he always did, but now his long dressing-gown-like garment is of pure silk instead of cotton—produced, dyed in gay colours, and made in his own country.

\* Young Communist League.

† An open-air tea-house where Eastern people sit and drink tea and smoke hookahs, and discuss all manner of things.

‡ Died August, 1945.

There are many like Djhambul whose work and life is to give pleasure and encouragement to their people.

Vali Zade Said Ali comes from Tadzhikistan. His country is five times as large as Belgium. In the east it borders on China, in the south on Afghanistan, and it is very close to India. His country was once a barren land, but now it grows cotton, and mulberry trees for silkworms. Now, too, there are vast beet farms for the sugar that all Russians love. Before 1917 his countrymen could not read or write ; now their children go to nurseries and kindergartens, schools and universities. Before 1917 his people lived in tumbledown villages called kishlaks. To-day many of them live in modern towns, such as Stalinabad, the capital, or Leninabad, or Kannibadam. They have factories with modern machinery. In 1936 the Tadzhik peasants built, in their spare time, the famous Ferghana Irrigation Canal in forty-five days. Engineers had said it would take two years. More irrigation canals have been built and Tadzhik deserts are now growing crops much needed by the people.

Ali makes up songs about these things. Here is one of them :—

#### SONG ABOUT STALIN

*By Vali Zade Said Ali*

*Salaam ! Salaam ! We greet you, best of friends,  
 By whom the seeds of happiness were planted,  
 By whom this freedom we enjoy was granted,  
 Who with a father's fond affection tends  
 The children of this land that he has built,  
 You are its glory and your fame can never wane.  
 Brighter you are than either sun or moon.  
 Around the world your wisdom's rays are playing.  
 You gave the toilers of this land the boon  
 Of joy—see in the breeze the banners swaying!  
 Now, nations that were enemies in days  
 Gone by walk side by side in friendship's ways.  
 And knowledge, like the Darya's rapid waters,  
 Flows through the land, lifting our sons and daughters,  
 Feeding the mind and arming for the fray  
 The countless fighters pledged to go your way.*

*Knowledge yields fruits like orchards in the fall—  
The blood has frozen in the veins of all  
Who stand opposed to you. The present age  
Is great because of you, most wise, most sage.  
We soldiers in the army you have trained,  
We workers of the happy, laughing land,  
We love you, father, friend, as would a band  
Of merry children with a love unfeigned.  
From your great love the hearts in us are glowing.  
Your name is held in honour far and wide.  
We have an everlasting friend and guide  
In you who are all-seeing and all-knowing.*

Victor Kopylov is a typical example of the new Soviet citizen with his inventiveness and resourcefulness. A young railway engineer, he was very worried about the Tashkent-Ashkhabad-Krasnovodsk railway. After it leaves the Ferghana valley, the railway crosses the grim "Hungry Steppes." For miles and miles there is nothing but sand and rock, with perhaps here and there an oasis. Worse awaits the train when it enters the Kara-Kum desert in Kazakhstan. Here the winds whip up the sands into great hills, then in a rage sweep them away. There is a swirl and storm of sand, which threatens to engulf the railway completely.

Before the railway was built the only means of transport was camel caravan, which took two months from Tashkent to Krasnovodsk. The task of building the railway was a stern one : the sand drifts had to be fought all the time. They continually buried sections of the railway.

When Victor arrived, he began by sinking into the sand boxes made of cane—pulled out of shape to make a rhomboid, and a desert grass called "camel's weed." The boxes acted as a sort of flower-pot : the sand mixed with the grass retained any moisture, the weed and cane preventing full evaporation. A soil was thus formed in which hardy seeds could grow. These seeds produced roots, which bound the sand and formed a barrier against the shifting sands outside the box, and held it in place. The local railway workers adopted this ingenious idea.

Some years later a railway worker, Terenty Yefimov, decided that the soil that had been produced in the desert should now produce fruit. It seemed absurd at first glance, orchards in the desert ; but Yefimov persuaded many of the railwaymen to join with him in planting orchards, experimenting with the most suitable varieties of fruit. The men learnt how to find the water that often exists under the sand, how to cement the walls of wells, and how to make irrigation channels.

Now the train passes through orchards with apple, apricot, and peach trees, and vineyards heavy with bunches of grapes. This initiative of the railwaymen stimulated the Government of Turkmenistan, through which the railway runs, to spend money on nurseries to provide seeds and seedlings for these railway gardens and orchards in the desert.

Kurambek Alimozhanov lives in a village in Kazakhstan, a different republic. As he looks out from his cottage, his gaze falls on a sun-flooded Steppe, stretching flat for miles, as far as the eye can see. Here is the beginning of the desert. The soil is not poor, but without water it will produce nothing. So the peasant's chief task is to water the land.

Kurambek goes to a native school, where he is taught in his own Uigur language. In 1943 he was twelve years old, in Class V, and began to learn Russian. He was not yet very fluent in Russian and made many mistakes. But he was quite sure by the time he was in Class VII or VIII he'd make no mistakes ; at least, no more than is usual. Kurambek is very proud of his cottage, which was built only eight years ago. He can remember as a small child living in a skin tent with a hole through the centre for a chimney. He can remember how his family used to wander from place to place. He much prefers living in a cottage on a collective farm. But there are still families living in tents. Changes don't come all at once.

Kurambek tells us that for two years during the war he and other boys and girls took charge of watering the fields in the summer holiday. Early any morning they might be seen on their plots, where they grew medicinal plants, with trousers rolled up or skirts tucked up, hard at work. They divert

water from the large irrigation canal into the smaller canals. From these they send the water into shallow ditches that lead to every corner of the field. At intervals of five or six feet there are pools, which hold the water until more is needed. Kurambek and his friends dug the ditches and the pools. The pools need constant attention : as one gets full, some water must be let out. This is done with a special shovel with a hole in the centre. Kurambek has to be on the watch the whole time. He must dig new pools for plants that have received no water.

At midday it is terribly hot. In peace-time Kurambek and his friends would take their siesta (midday sleep), but in wartime, with labour so scarce, they worked on until the sun went down. In the autumn came the harvest, and school, and hobbies, and Kurambek had earned quite a lot of money. Most of it went to buy gifts for the Red Army, but he saved some to buy an accordion such as he had seen a Russian boy play on the films.

We might, in our wanderings, meet a Buryat woman, from Buryat-Mongolia, driving a tractor. She is high-cheek-boned, with slanting black eyes and straight black hair. Her face doesn't look very expressive until she smiles. Ask her who she is and she will tell you a long story. She and her family belonged to a tribe of fur trappers who wandered from place to place in their country—Buryat-Mongolia. None of them could read or write before 1920. Their Shahman religion did not allow a woman to look in a mirror, or dance or sing. Her father was very brave. He joined the Soviet people when they came to tell the Buryats about the new life in Russia. He might easily have been murdered for this.

When the Soviet authority became stronger, schools were started and his daughter was one of the first to join. All the old people lifted up their hands in horror. Surely this was the end of all things—a woman-child to go to school and sit with men children !

Far from being the end of all things it was the beginning, for she went on to an agricultural school, and soon showed

*S.C.R. Photo***A BURYAT-MONGOLIAN WITH HIS CAMEL**

The camel is often the only means of transport in Buryat-Mongolia.

an aptitude for machinery. Now she is a Stakhanovite (see p. 64) tractor driver, ploughs more than her quota, and can repair the machine if anything goes wrong.

Her father is the manager of a sable-breeding farm. Both father and daughter are in the local choir and as for a mirror, there is generally one in her pocket !

The people in the Arctic differ considerably from those in hot Asiatic lands, but they are similar in adopting new ideas. Though their usual means of transport is the reindeer or the dog, they are also at home in aeroplanes, which are used to link up the towns. Sometimes they are used to take children to school, as you will read on page 41.

In these brief sketches I am trying to give you some idea of the great variety of Soviet peoples : Russians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Turkmens, Georgians, Oirots, Bashkirs, and many, many others. They differ very much in manners and customs, in dress and language, but they have much in common because they have accepted Soviet principles of organizing the country.

They all love their country, the U.S.S.R., in very practical ways. They take a pride in its cities and its buildings and help the authorities to keep them clean. There is no litter in the streets. The Moscow underground always looks clean and tidy, and the parks, even after a May Day holiday, are

free from litter. The people obey rules and bye-laws. They say, "If a rule or bye-law is bad or silly, then we must get it changed. If we have no criticism of the rule, then we must obey it."

The drive that has been going on ever since 1917 to make the people understand that the country is really theirs, that they can make it rich and great, or keep it poor and miserable, has met with increasing success. Naturally, there are still people in the country who do not understand the full meaning of citizenship, but the majority are very much alive to their duties and rights. When a job needs doing someone will be found to set about it, and those who might be content to do nothing but grumble at the authorities are moved by this example to become active.

If there are no nurseries or kindergartens near by and little children are left uncared for, a housewives' committee will set about organizing a simple nursery and looking after it.

On the Cherepanovsk Collective Farm, in their free time, the peasants built two new secondary schools for their children, with gifts of materials. The local education authority, which was a slack one, and had ignored instructions to build a school, was then stirred to provide the teachers.

In June 1943 the members of another collective farm organized a School Day. The schools were badly in need of repairs and decoration. No workers were available owing to the war, so early one morning the members of the farm brought gifts : timber, nails, tools, paint and brushes, and glass for broken windows. They made a jollification of it ; the local band played, and some of them sang. Over five thousand people lent a hand, and by the end of the day the schools were ready for next term. More and more is this readiness to help themselves becoming a characteristic of Soviet people.

The Russians are very friendly and hospitable. A foreigner travelling in the Soviet Union soon becomes aware of this. Anybody who is prepared to be friendly is plied with hospitality, and will leave with many genuine invitations to stay a week or longer on his next visit. A train journey is likely to

be enlivened with chess or dominoes or music and there will be much talk all the way.

One cannot help noticing in the Russians, too, their love of life, of enjoyment and gaiety. It is not quite true to say that all Russians sing and dance, but it is almost true. On the



S.C.R. Photo

#### UZBEK MEN AND WOMEN CELEBRATE THE COMPLETION OF AN IRRIGATION CANAL

This was a piece of community voluntary work. Note the beautiful rug that takes the place of a table-cloth.

slightest excuse, they have a festival. The completion of an irrigation canal or a dam, or of a great victory, calls for a festival. Election day is a festival. The day before school begins is a children's festival. The beginning of spring sowing, or bringing in the harvest, is a festival.

The Russians are fond of good food, and they like wines, which are very cheap. A popular drink is kvass, made of fermented bread. They take their wines with their meals ; cocktails and drinking at odd times between meals are rare. A drunken person is rarely seen, but when he is found in a town he is taken, not to a police station, but to the de-

alcoholizing station. There he is given strong treatment and a bed. In the morning he is presented with a very stiff bill for lodging and treatment.

Russians have a youthful curiosity about everything. They will ask a foreign visitor endless questions about his country, himself, and his family. Grown-ups are as interested as youngsters in the mechanism of things.

Family ties are very strong in the Soviet Union to-day. The bitterness and opposition that so often existed between the younger and older generations in the early years after 1918 have long since disappeared. Parents who neglect their children are considered a disgrace by their neighbours and are likely to be shown up in public. Children who behave badly to their parents are considered to be equally disgraceful.

The Soviet Union was, in 1940, advancing rapidly towards a comfortable and varied life for all its people. The older generation were beginning to enjoy the rewards of all that they had endured and given up. They could see their sons and daughters marching forward with a sure step. Mistakes are made, of course, but there is a definite policy to put these right, no matter who is involved. Germany's attack on the Soviet Union meant that everything had to be concentrated on winning the war. Yet construction and social services never stopped completely. To-day the Soviet citizen is aware of his capabilities. He had no doubt of victory, together with Britain and the U.S.A. The war over, the task of development is being taken up once more.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE SOVIET CITIZEN RULES HIMSELF

A FEW days before 12th December 1937 the whole of the Soviet Union was alive with excitement. Over that vast continent, two and a half times as big as the U.S.A., forty times as big as Germany, there was a sense of expectancy. Strangers exchanged greetings, youth seemed overflowing with

life. A listener overheard snatches of conversation such as : "Yes, Stalin is our candidate." "We're all going to vote." "No time—must prepare for our big meeting." "Twenty-five-year-old Valya is our candidate."

What was it all about ? For the Soviet citizen something momentous was about to take place. On December 12 every citizen in the Soviet Union, no matter what his or her nationality, religion, race, or sex, no matter what education he had had, what his job or who his parent, every citizen aged eighteen or over would enter a polling-booth and cast a vote secretly to elect his or her representative to the Soviet Parliament.

"But why all this excitement and fuss ?" you may say.

Why indeed ? For the first time in their history, citizens would elect their government directly by secret ballot. For the first time in the history of that country the shepherd in the high uplands of Armenia, the worker in the vineyards of Georgia, the hunter in the north, the gold miner in the Lena goldfields, the sailor in the Baltic or Black Sea, the dockers or coal miners—for the first time they could elect directly the man or woman of their choice. For twenty years, since 1917, they had been working towards this goal and training themselves for this responsibility, and at last the great day had arrived.

Meetings were held everywhere for several days before the 12th, so that the electors should understand clearly what were the problems facing the country, what kind of government was required, and what kind of people deserved to sit in parliament. Boys and girls at school helped to check the accuracy of the registers. They too held their meetings,

\* From 1918 to 1937 voting was by show of hands and representation was indirect : a village or city Soviet elected a representative to the District Congress of Soviets, this District Congress elected representatives to the regional one and so on until the All-Union Congress of Soviets. There was one representative in the All-Union Congress of Soviets for every 25,000 urban workers and one for every 125,000 rural workers. Government was built like a pyramid ; at the top the chief organ, the All-Union Congress of Soviets, and at the base the local Soviets or councils.

North, South, East or West, in islands in the Arctic or Pacific, in the Kara-Kum Desert or the experimental Plant Breeding Station on the Pamirs, in fields and factories, there was only one topic of conversation—the elections.

December 5, one of those pre-election days, was the anniversary of the Stalinist Constitution, adopted in 1936 : an added reason for celebration. Great meetings grew into carnivals, speech grew into music. In all the cities singing columns marched along the wide streets, with bands or orchestras. On the roofs and balconies of houses appeared orchestras. In Moscow alone nearly two million people took part in two hundred and eighty meetings.

The sun set, the streets became dark, but the crowds would not go home. The streets, the squares, in city or village, belonged to the people for the full twenty-four hours. Carnival lights appeared everywhere. In the clubs, in the open air, combed by the rays of searchlights, thousands of people danced and sang, recited poetry—Mayakovsky and Pushkin—at the tops of their voices, or sang songs of the Revolution and songs of the people.

Suddenly the lights went out and white screens appeared on the walls of buildings, to show films. Ten o'clock saw the end of a concert in the Stalin Motor Works Club. Time to go home—but who would think of going home when at eleven the masked ball would begin in the squares and streets? No one noticed how the night went, and at three in the morning it seemed hardly worth while going home at all. And on the day itself, December 12, from six in the morning until midnight people streamed to cast their votes. In the hunting co-operatives in the north they had put the reindeer sledges ready the night before. A whole settlement went off in a joyous procession.

In the far-off Sayan range the Tafalars, the smallest nationality in the U.S.S.R., cast their votes equally with the citizens from Moscow. These people numbered only 400 in 1937. To get a train they have first to make a journey by air from Biryas, their capital, where they mine mica and gold.

To Kalakan on the River Vitim, a tributary of the Lena river as it nears its source, the district centre of the Vitimo (Olekmansk National Area), came the Evenki, to elect their candidate. Like many another nationality, they were totally illiterate twenty years ago. Their territory lies north of the Yablonoy range, between the Vitim and Olekma rivers. In



S.C.R. Photo

**STALIN AND KALININ**  
At a meeting of Stakhanovite Collective-Farmers.

the hills and valleys of sunny Azerbaidzhan, the republic bordering the Caspian Sea, they had a holiday from the cotton fields and the rice fields, from the oil wells and silk-weaving factories, from work in the orchards, to perform that symbolic act of freedom—to cast their votes for the man or woman whom they knew and in whom they had confidence.

In trains, on boats, people voted. Wherever men and women found themselves, they had a right to vote. People greet each other with "S Velikim Prazdnikom"—a Happy Holiday.\*

\* It really means more than this : *Congratulations on being so fortunate as to have a great day to celebrate* is nearer its meaning.

Such was the first election. Almost equally exciting was the first session of the Supreme Soviet. Long and difficult was the journey to the capital made by many deputies. Those from the peoples of the North began their journey on reindeer or dog sleigh, changed into cars, then into planes, and lastly into express trains. The deputies from Central Asia crossed the sandy wastes on camels and the far-off watchers of the frontiers set off on horseback. When elections have become a matter of course there will naturally be less excitement about them.

What kind of people did the Soviet citizens elect at their first election? Let us imagine we are standing outside the Kremlin watching. Here comes the great scientist, seventy-five-year old A. S. Bach.\* He has certainly helped the people. Some of his researches have been very practical in improving tea blends and the keeping quality of bread. And here is twenty-six-year-old mill-hand Klava Sakharova, who organized the workers to achieve great records in the mill. Her appointment as deputy to the director of the factory was met with delight by her fellow-workers. In the parliaments of the U.S.S.R. there are quite a number of representatives under 30 years.

When the workers who built the Moscow underground railway were asked why they elected twenty-five-year-old Tatyana Fyodorova, they replied, "She's clever, straightforward, and a strong-minded person. Her eyes are clear, and she knows how to get on with people. She loves life and she loves people. She is always thinking about the people." She gave up a good job after finishing her technical training to work underground to help to build the Metro. Working underground, Tatyana dreamed of conquering the heavens, a dream she realized. Since those days she has made twenty parachute descents and is now a pilot.

Here is Dzibout Dzugayev, from Ossetia in the Caucasus, the son of a former poverty-stricken peasant. He finished school in 1932. He was elected secretary of the Komsomol in his Kolkhoz. There was a great deal of grain wasted in the collective farms in those days. Dzibout responded to the call

\* Now over 80 years old.

to fight waste. He organized the members of his Komsomol and under his supervision and encouragement their success was great. He brought electricity and wireless to the field camps and helped to set up a school for Peasant Youth, where young peasants could continue their education. In 1935, at a conference of the best farmers, he was decorated with the Order of the Red Banner.

Here comes a young airman, in helmet and greatcoat, blue epaulettes on his shoulders, silver wings on his breast. He comes from the Far East. When the people first chose him as candidate he had to give them a full and honest account of his life. His people were satisfied with this airman officer, a former baker's hand and fisherman.

As we stand there, we hear shouts of "Zdravstvuyte"—"*How are you?*"—shouted to half-a-dozen airmen who appear to be well known by name. They are the great adventurers and explorers of the sky—Gromov, Chkalov, Baydukov, Belyakov, Yumashin, and Danilin. (Alas, some of them have died since 1937.)

Here comes Katerina Kozhushana, 25-year-old deputy. Daily a stream of visitors comes to her office in a Ukrainian village, for help and advice. A man who had an accident needs a letter for a convalescent home. A mother of seven children has not received assistance due to her. A Red Army man writes that his old mother has been left without care: Katerina fetches the astonished old woman in her car and drives off to the management of the collective farm. "Why have you forgotten about her?" she demands. Others come thinking to fool their young deputy, but without success.

Such are typical members of the Soviet Parliament, professors, industrial workers, peasants, service men, and former revolutionaries.

#### THE NEW CONSTITUTION

In 1936 the people of the Soviet Union adopted a new constitution. "New" is not really the right word—"changed" or "amended" would be more correct.

Ever since 1922, when the first constitution was adopted, the country had been growing and developing, and the people growing and developing with it. In 1936 in many ways it was almost a different country compared with 1922. Many of the laws and regulations no longer applied, while the new situation made it possible to broaden the rights of the whole people. It seemed to the Soviet authorities the sensible thing to get rid of outworn laws and regulations, and to embody into the constitution the rights that the people had earned.

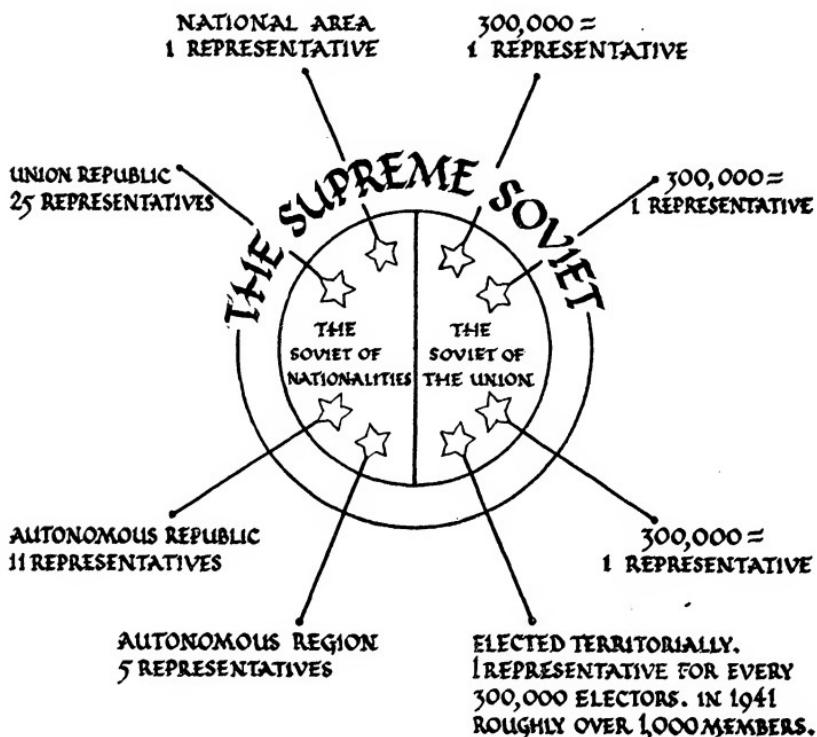
The constitution was first published in draft form, in something like eighty million copies, in sixty different languages. It was discussed everywhere, in factories, in farms, in schools and universities, in homes, and in hospitals. Thousands and thousands of letters were received by the national papers, criticizing, suggesting improvements and alterations. The Constitution Commission read the letters, discussed them, and where it seemed good, adopted the people's suggestions.

The Soviet Union is a country consisting of Union Republics. The number to-day is sixteen. Each republic is equal to the others politically, whatever its size or development. Each republic has the right to secede. By a decision taken in 1943, each Union Republic has, in addition to such Commissariats (ministries) as Education, Health, Agriculture, Light Industry, and so on, a Commissariat of Defence (War Office) and a Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. This means that each Union Republic has a national army and each republic can have direct relations with foreign countries, can send ambassadors or ministers and make its trade agreements.

There is above them the Union Commissariats of Defence and Foreign Affairs, which co-ordinate all the activities. In the same way, a Union Commissariat\* of Health was created in 1940, because it was found necessary to co-ordinate the health work of the separate republics.

\* Union Commissariats (for the whole of the U.S.S.R.) are duplicated in the republics. All-Union commissariats exist *only* for the whole of the U.S.S.R.

# ELECTORAL SYSTEM



Union Republics have smaller units, called Autonomous Republics, where they contain large enough national areas. For example, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic had in 1939 eleven Autonomous Republics. Their numbers may increase, for as a region grows in importance it is raised to this status. Autonomous Republics have commissariats for their immediate affairs—education, health, and a number of industries.

In its turn, an Autonomous Republic may have Autonomous Regions and National Areas. The object of this division is to give self-government to all the different nationalities, and to help them develop their life according to their traditions.

According to the Constitution, every citizen, on reaching the age of eighteen, no matter who or what he is, has the right to vote.

#### ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Every 300,000 inhabitants, over 18 years of age, elect one representative to the Soviet of the U.S.S.R. As each Union Republic and Autonomous Republic has its own Supreme Soviet, or Parliament, a Soviet citizen is represented in every governmental body.

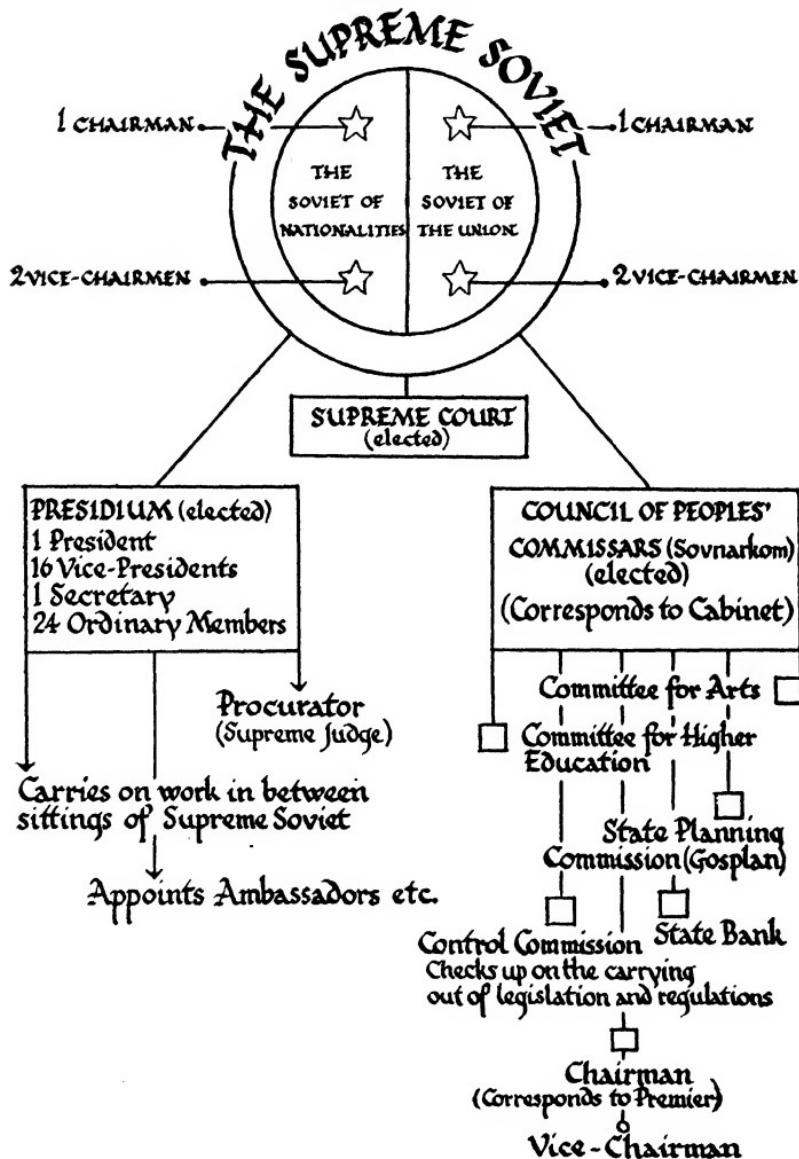
Candidates for the Supreme Soviet are put forward by different organizations, as for example a trade union, a scientific association, an association of musicians, an agricultural union. There is a preliminary meeting in a district of representatives of all the organizations concerned for discussion of the merits of all the candidates put forward. As a result of this discussion, the numbers are drastically reduced. Candidates do not have to pay any expenses, either directly or indirectly.

At the last election people were asked by the national papers and by the government to vote for the Bolshevik block. These candidates were members of the Communist Party and non-members who supported the Bolshevik structure of society and form of government. A candidate is *not* required to be a member of the Communist Party, as is sometimes believed outside the U.S.S.R.

Side by side with the Soviet of the Union sits the Soviet of Nationalities, elected on a basis of nationality. This Soviet is made up of twenty-five representatives from each Union Republic (whether it is R.S.F.S.R. with its 109 million people or Armenia with less than two million), eleven representatives from each Autonomous Republic, five from each Autonomous Region, and one from each National Area.

The two Chambers, as they are called, together form the Supreme Soviet, or Parliament, of the U.S.S.R., in which all final authority resides, and a member of one is automatically a member of the Supreme Soviet. Each chamber has the

# SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT OF U.S.S.R.



right to put forward new legislation, but this must be approved by both, either sitting together as one House or at separate sittings. The Supreme Soviet is elected for four years, but if a representative ceases to satisfy his electors, ceases to look after their interests, he or she can be recalled—that is, dismissed—and another elected.

The Soviet of Nationalities and the Soviet of the Union each elect their own chairman and vice-chairmen. One of the vice-chairmen is a woman teacher from Azerbaijan, Chimnaz Aslanova. Another woman teacher, Sarycheva, was in 1944 elected as a vice-chairman of the Union Soviet. Each of the Soviets appoints a committee to deal with new legislation; to prepare new laws to bring up at the meetings of the Supreme Soviet.

Sitting together, the two chambers elect the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. It is the Presidium that summons the Supreme Soviet to a session. In between the sittings, the Presidium issues decrees, and take decisions on all major questions affecting the life of the U.S.S.R. All these have to be approved when the Supreme Soviet meets, which it does four times a year.

The Supreme Soviet appoints the Commissars (Ministers) and creates new Commissariats (Ministries) as the need arises. The Commissars together form the Council of People's Commissars, which in some ways corresponds to the British Cabinet. The Sovnarkom (the shortened name for the Council, in Russian) has to carry out the Supreme Soviet's instructions as they relate to the various departments. In addition, it can from time to time issue decrees or instructions which may deal with the activities of any one commissariat.

The Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars corresponds to the British Prime Minister. For a long time Molotov held this position. In 1941, after Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, Stalin was elected Premier, and Molotov became Foreign Minister.

The Presidium elects its chairman, who becomes President of the U.S.S.R. Since the beginning of the Soviet State

Kalinin has held that post. There are as many vice-presidents as there are Union Republics. The Presidium appoints ambassadors as well as the Procurator General, a sort of Lord Chief Justice.

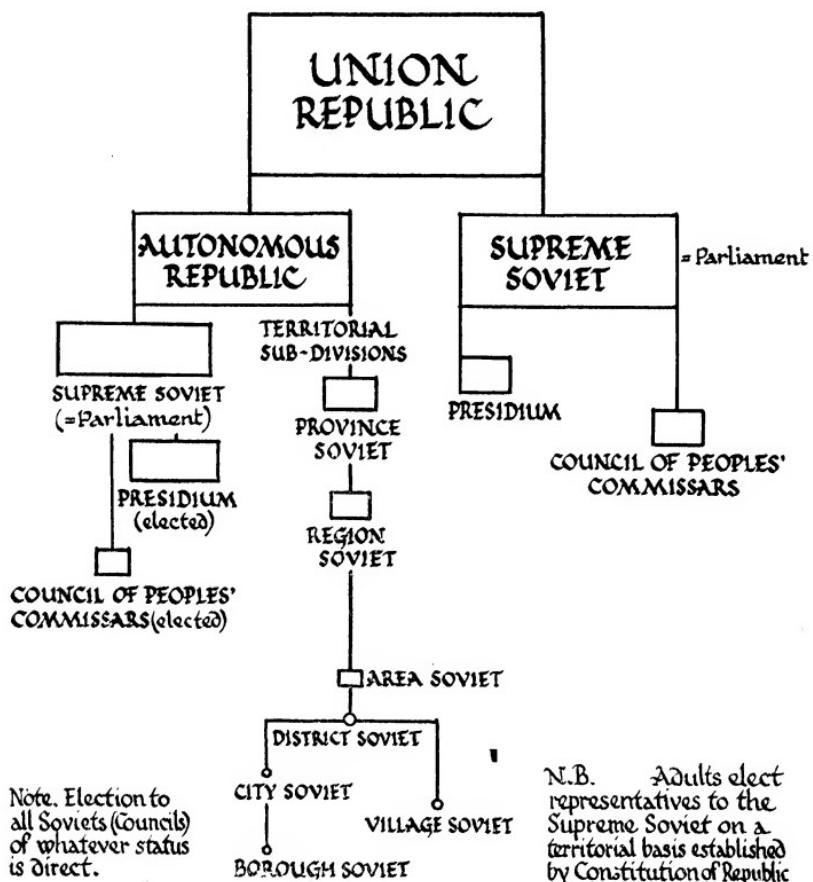
While questions of war and peace, of industrial and agricultural planning affect people's lives basically, their daily life is also affected by much simpler, local problems. Nurseries for children, housing problems, school feeding, and school playgrounds, a proper bus service, the water supply, and sanitation in old or new cottages : these are questions that matter very much to the individual living in a city or a village. And these questions have to be settled locally.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Every citizen at 18 has the right to elect his district or county council, as well as his city or village council. The right to recall an unsatisfactory councillor exists in local government. The Council, or Soviet, to use the Russian term, of a large city like Moscow has its different departments, such as Health, Education, Entertainment, and so on. In addition, it runs local industry and builds houses. Each department has its permanent salaried head and staffs, who are responsible to the elected council. As in any city council in Britain, there are a great many committees. The elected councillors who serve on these committees must know something about the work, and must show a readiness to develop and improve it. Every few years new people are put into the positions of chairman and secretary, so that more and more people learn to take responsibility. Latterly there have been short-term schools, that is courses of study, for chairmen, deputy-chairmen, and secretaries of rural councils, to help them with their local government problems.

A very large proportion of women take office in local government. Members are encouraged to uncover inefficiency, slackness, and waste, all of which are still to be found in local government, and sometimes even in the national government. Here the practice of self-criticism, which is so very widespread,

# DECENTRALISATION OF GOVERNMENT



is helpful. Anything that goes wrong is openly discussed at the council meetings, or at special meetings at factory, farm, school, or office. The local and national press take it up. Criticism continues until the matter is put right, which may mean the dismissal of a person, however high his position.

The Soviet citizen finds, as others find, that to be a good citizen requires knowledge and continuous watchfulness.

Above all, it requires the ability to make other people interested in local problems. There are citizens in the U.S.S.R. as elsewhere, who don't want to be bothered with matters outside their personal lives, who are very ready to leave others to solve local or national problems. The man or woman proud of his or her country tries to wake up such people.

The Communist Party is a voluntary organization. People who wish to join apply to the local group but candidates must pass a year's probation test. The role of the Communist Party in Soviet life is to act as the spearhead of progress. The members have no greater rights and often fewer privileges than the non-party citizen. They are expected to have a good understanding of politics and political theory and to continue their general education. They are found in every organization and institution, where their task is to help people to understand the national and international situation. They have to persuade their fellow workers to make the necessary effort to carry out industrial or agricultural reforms, or to improve living conditions : in a word to live and work in a way worthy of a Soviet citizen. Needless to say, not every member of the Communist Party discharges his duties entirely satisfactorily. Reading Soviet papers, we very often come across paragraphs where local Party members are reprimanded, in no gentle way, for not having done their duty.

There are periodical reviews, when there may be a thorough investigation—public for members—of any member about whose work or behaviour there have been complaints. When these are serious and justified the person is expelled from the Party.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

#### AT SCHOOL

LIKE the English, the French, and the American children, the Russians go to school ; every morning all over the country forty million boys and girls from seven to seventeen years of age set off for school. In addition, all over the

country about eight million younger children are taken to nurseries and kindergartens, and thousands of older ones go to technical schools and universities. Yet twenty-six years ago comparatively few of them went to school, because the authorities in those days did not provide many schools or teachers. In contrast to the present-day forty million schoolchildren, there were less than eight million in Tsarist days.

The schools vary greatly. There are still many old buildings, and in country places there are still schools with only one or

perhaps two classrooms, with one teacher acting as both Head and teacher. But every year sees an increasing number of fine new buildings. Even while the country was at war, between 1941 and 1943 the Soviet authorities put up 2060 new schools.

#### A KINDERGARTEN IN PETROZAVODSK

This town is the capital of Finno-Karelia.

Sometimes the school is a tent. There are still nomadic pastoral tribes in Kazakhstan, who move to new pastures with their flocks and with them goes the tent school. There are boarding-schools for such children, but many of the parents refuse to part from their younger ones. As the desert lands become fertile and the poor pasture lands improve, it is expected that these tribes will become more settled.

The vast majority of schools are day schools. In remote places which are sparsely populated, so that there are not enough children between seven and fourteen to form a school, and fewer still between fourteen and seventeen for a middle or upper school, boarding-schools are provided. The children may go to their distant school by train, but more often than not there are no railways in the neighbourhood. In such cases



*S.C.R. Photo*

they may travel on horseback, or in a Ford, if the collective farm can spare it, or on camel back, as in Kazakhstan. In the tundra they may use canoes or dog-sleighs, and they may even travel by aeroplane, as happened to a group of boys and girls from one of the northern tribes, whose journey to school normally took two weeks. Much of it had to be done on foot ; towards the end of the journey they got stuck in some marshes, and were afraid they would be late for the beginning of term. One of them went to the nearest settlement and persuaded the chairman to send a wireless message to the nearest air station. Within a short time a plane arrived and took them off to school.

Whichever way pupils travel, on September 1, when the new school year begins all over the Soviet Union, forty million boys and girls are in their desks.

The day before school begins is called the School festival—or in Russian “Shkolniy Prazdnik.” In every city and rural centre school boys and girls gather in halls, great and small. Here they are addressed by well-known and popular leaders of Soviet life. Very often older pupils, too, will make speeches. There then follows a concert arranged by the children, with often a famous musician or actress taking part ; and finally there are refreshments.

Breaking-up school for the summer holidays is another occasion for a festival. At this time of the year—June—it is held in the parks, when there may be a pageant : there will certainly be music and dancing, and very likely Punch and Judy for the younger ones, and clowns and comedians for any one who likes them.

Although the schools are all State schools, all free for pupils up to fourteen years of age, and all have the same social standing, the kind of education it is possible for any one to have is varied.

It is not unusual for a whole family to be receiving some kind of education : grandparents, parents, and children. Let us, for example, take the family Karashchenko, living in Kharkov, as an average family. Grandpa and Grandma Karaschenko, both in their sixties, are here on a visit from

their collective farm in Zyatkovitza. They have both received their education since 1917, after they were grandparents. They found it very hard, and their attendance at the school for illiterates was not always very good. They were not quite sure in those days whether education was worth all the bother.

Grandma attends courses in the Kolkhoz reading-room in the winter. She always wanted to know how people lived in olden times, and now she is learning about the first people to settle in her country, before it became the Russian Empire. Grandpa finished two courses in agriculture a few years ago. Now he is particularly interested in bees and will attend a course of lectures next winter. He still thinks he can get more and better honey than the younger folk.

Andrei and Lizaveta, the parents, also received most of their education under the Soviets, since they were grown up. Andrei was twenty-one and married when the Revolution occurred. When Rabfacs (courses for workers preparing them for universities) were organized, Andrei joined a course that would take him to an engineering institute, but as he did not finish it, he remained in the sugar factory. His skill as a worker, his organizing ability, and his readiness to teach others earned him promotion in the factory. Then, when he was already the father of six children, he was sent to an industrial academy for five years to study the principles of his industry, its theory, practice, and organization. While he was studying, he received an allowance for those of his children who were under 16 years old. Now he is head of the Sugar Trust, which is responsible for a number of sugar factories.

Lizaveta, the mother, had been to school before the Revolution, until she was fourteen. She became a village teacher, but gave it up and went into a factory. After finishing her Rabfac course she had four years in a technical institute. Then she became interested in cosmetics, and took a special course not many years ago. She is now head of a cosmetics factory, and is planning to work for a science degree, but she is not sure whether she will succeed.

Grigor, the eldest son, is twenty-one, and is training as a doctor in Moscow. He obtained "Excellent" in two-thirds of his subjects and "Good" in the others in the final school-leaving examination three years ago, and he continues to be an A student, so his university education is free. In addition, he receives a maintenance grant. If he had passed with only *Good* in all his subjects, his parents would have had to pay for his university education, unless his father were serving with the Forces : in such a case all education is free.

Mikola, the second son, is nineteen. He wanted to be an agronomist—an agricultural specialist ; but he didn't want to go to the university. He didn't feel quite clever enough for that. He left school when he was nearly fifteen and went to an agricultural college for three years. As he was only an average student his parents had to pay fees. When he is older, he may perhaps go to an agricultural academy for five years. For this he would have to show himself a good worker, with plenty of initiative and readiness to experiment.

Katya, now seventeen, always wanted to teach little children, so two years ago she went to the training-college for nursery-infant-school teachers. She has one more year to finish. She thinks the factories and collective farms that haven't carried out the government's instructions of 1938 ought to be heavily fined. All factories and collective and State farms were instructed to have enough nurseries (for children from 6 weeks to 3 years) and nursery-infant schools for all the children of their workers, but many were unable to carry out the instruction.

Domna is fourteen and attends the ballet school. As a tiny child she was always dancing. When she was barely seven her mother took her to the School of Dancing for a test. She showed such talent that she was accepted for the next term in the Ballet School. Here she had to learn all the ordinary subjects that everybody learns at school : first the three R's, drawing, and music, then geography and history, and nature study, Ukrainian and Russian ; later, physics and chemistry, mathematics, literature, and a foreign language. Her dancing is in addition. As her dancing required more time, when she

was about fourteen some of the early subjects were dropped. She will stay at the Ballet School until she is eighteen, and then join a studio of the Kharkov Opera and Ballet Theatre, where she will have to continue part-time training. Domna's parents do not have to pay for her education. As her work is good, she will later receive maintenance grants.

Pavel, Domna's twin, wants to be a miner. He says coal is essential for the industries that will make their country secure and their people well off. He thinks it an honour to be a miner. Like nearly a million other boys of similar age who are going to work in industry as skilled workers, he is going to a school for industrial training which is in the factory buildings or near the mine, for two years (in wartime it had to be cut down to one year). This training is free ; the boys receive their board and accommodation in hostels, and their uniforms are provided. There are a great variety of vocational schools and professional schools, in addition to industrial training schools. Boys trained in the latter must go into a government industry for four years. In normal times Soviet law does not permit any one under sixteen to work in a factory.

Cousin Danilo, who is twelve, says he's going to be an author, like Alexei Tolstoy or Simonov. He is good at all his subjects and will stay at school till he is seventeen, and then go to Kharkov University. Sometimes he says he is going to be an orientalist, study Persian, Chinese, and other Eastern languages. At present he is just beginning English in addition to Russian. Like children in all the different republics of the Union, he learns in his native language—Ukrainian for him—so for him Russian is a second language ; but when he gets to form seven (there are ten forms in a Soviet secondary, or Ten-year, school) he will do most subjects in Russian. It is harder for a Jewish child in Kharkov who goes to the Jewish school, where they learn in Yiddish, and have to take first Ukrainian and then Russian, and in addition, English, French, or German.

Like his cousins Domna and Pavel, Danilo takes a great interest in his form and school. He has been elected editor of

the wall-newspaper, which the form editorial committee brings out every month. In this form they get much help from the literature master. In the ninth and tenth forms, the editorial committee does all the work, but out of courtesy consult their form master and the Head.



*S.C.R. Photo*

**CHILDREN IN A BALLET SCHOOL**

These are gifted children, being trained.

The wall-newspaper is a very large sheet on which go any literary or artistic efforts of form members. It is also used for notices of form and school activities, and for caricaturing the lazy or the undisciplined in the form.

Valya, who is ten and is in Form Three in the Ten-year School, has been elected class monitor. She hopes soon to be accepted in the Pioneers, a boy and girl youth organization something on the lines of Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. They are organized in school, in links and companies. Membership is voluntary. They have their Pioneers' room in the school. It is generally a large room, which the Pioneers decorate as

they wish, and here they hold their committee meetings and other activities such as discussions, play readings and so on. Valya is very interested in sport and physical culture and was one of the first to join the School's Sports Association, formed in 1942. Her real love is for aeroplanes, and she hopes to become an aircraft designer and in her spare time to learn to fly.

The Karaschenkos' cousins, who live on a collective farm, go to similar kinds of schools, but in the country schools it is compulsory to spend four hours a week learning practical agriculture : soil, plants, the care of animals, tractors—their use and repair. One of these cousins is a boarder at the Kiev Music School ; he is very gifted and began to compose music when he was ten. Most of them will stay on the farm, after leaving school at fifteen, but one of the boys went to work in a factory when he was fourteen, as it was wartime. There is a continuation school attached to his factory. The boys and girls work six hours a day, and attend school for three hours three times a week, to continue their general education.

Nine-year-old Vadim, another cousin, whose father was killed at the front in a heroic fight in World War II, and who has made up his mind to be a soldier, has just started at the Suvorov Military School. Here the boys get their general education, with special military training as they grow older. It is a very great honour to be accepted in one of these schools, and the boys feel their bearing and discipline must be better than those of boys at ordinary schools. They will stay at the school till they are seventeen or eighteen, and then go on to military academies if they are good enough to train as officers. They can take up any branch of the Army, engineering, infantry, artillery, and so on. Naturally, if a boy finds after two or three years that he doesn't wish to go into the Army after all, he can enter a university or institute instead of a military academy, and prepare for another profession. In the Suvorov schools, as in the Industrial Training Schools, everything is free. Priority is given to boys whose fathers—privates or officers—were killed in the war.

The school day is shorter in Soviet schools than in British

schools, but the midday interval is shorter, too. Nearly everybody has dinner at school and, if necessary breakfast too, as all children do in nurseries and nursery-infant schools. There is homework for Soviet children, and many of them, like children in other countries, complain that they get too much. There are no scholarship examinations. Any boy or girl who reaches the required standard which is judged on the end of year examination in Form Seven (fourteen to fifteen years) can if he or she wishes, continue at school till seventeen, preparatory to the university or specialist institute. If there are not enough places priority is given to those who do best.

Holidays are short in the winter and spring—two weeks, but long in the summer—June, July, and August.

All families have the same opportunities for education as the Karaschenkos. All that is asked of boys and girls, and adults too, is that they shall work hard, be of good general behaviour, and take an interest in their school and work. Then they can be educated or trained for whatever job they desire, so far as their own ability makes it possible. All the specialist training is accompanied by general education, so that a Soviet citizen who is prepared to make the necessary effort has every opportunity of growing up into an educated person, with good taste, skilled at his work, and understanding his duty to himself and to society.

It must not be imagined that there are no lazy or badly behaved boys and girls in Soviet schools. There are, and they are a problem to their parents and their teachers. During the war, with parents away, and a great shortage of good teachers, there were cases, as in the Kazan district, of seriously bad discipline. There was too a certain amount of truancy in very many towns. Corporal punishment is not allowed but measures such as exclusion from membership of a Pioneer Palace (youth club), denial of visits to a theatre or cinema, are certainly used. The form committee will try and deal with the boy or girl. Teachers are instructed to try and find the cause of the bad behaviour. If all reasonable measures fail, the pupil may be excluded from school for a period, which

is considered a great disgrace for pupil and parents. Finally, for proved anti-social boys or girls, when all measures have failed and the home conditions are not helpful, there are special schools, called Labour Communes, which have been very successful indeed.

One of the great achievements is the conquest of illiteracy. Among adults it has been reduced to nil in some of the republics, while in the most backward it is only twenty-eight per cent. There are hundreds of thousands of village reading-rooms, which are educational centres, libraries, clubs, and houses of culture, where the formerly primitive peoples learn how to live in a civilized way.

The achievements for the formerly almost illiterate nationalities are even greater still. There, where hardly any children were at school, all are at school. Armenia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan to-day have universities. In the Arctic Circle there are nursery schools.

Universal education is very young in the Soviet Union, so it is to be expected that very often it does not reach the desired high standard. On the other hand, if we judge Soviet education by the country's achievements in peace and war, whether in the arts, in the sciences, in production, in organizing skill, or in efficiency, it will stand comparison with that of any country. Every intelligent Soviet citizen, however, will agree that there is still much room for improvement in accommodation, in equipment, and in teaching. There is every expectation of improvement because of the enthusiasm for education of the majority of the people. This enthusiasm is not due to-day, as it probably was some years ago, to the fact that education for all was something new in the country : to-day the majority of Soviet people take this education for granted. It is due to two things. One is the continued clever propaganda, through the Press, the wireless, the theatre, the cinema, and the clubs, stressing that a nation cannot become great unless all its people are educated. The second factor is the growing evidence that education makes life better in every way and is therefore worth the effort.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ON THE FARM

To those living in Britain, accustomed as we have been to having food brought to our doorstep from every corner of the earth, it is difficult to imagine people who for half the year had no fresh fruit or fresh vegetables, people who in any bad year might suffer famine, people inhabiting large tracts of land whose food consisted of frozen reindeer or fish and blubber. For the new Soviet Government it was vital to develop agriculture, first to give all the people enough bread—a very great task indeed—and later to add dairy produce and garden and orchard produce.

At first agriculture was carried on much in the old way, mostly a very backward way. As soon as the new Government considered the time was ripe, they began a campaign for co-operative farming, or collectivized agriculture as it is called. This was part of the vast plan the objects of which were first to restore the country—after World War I, the Civil War of 1917, and the great famine of 1921—to 1913 standard. The second step was to develop agriculture in time even beyond the most advanced countries. That was the goal the Soviet leaders set themselves.



HARVEST !

There were two forms of agricultural organization in the U.S.S.R. : the State Farms, of which there are about 4000, and the Collective Farms, of which there are about 243,000.

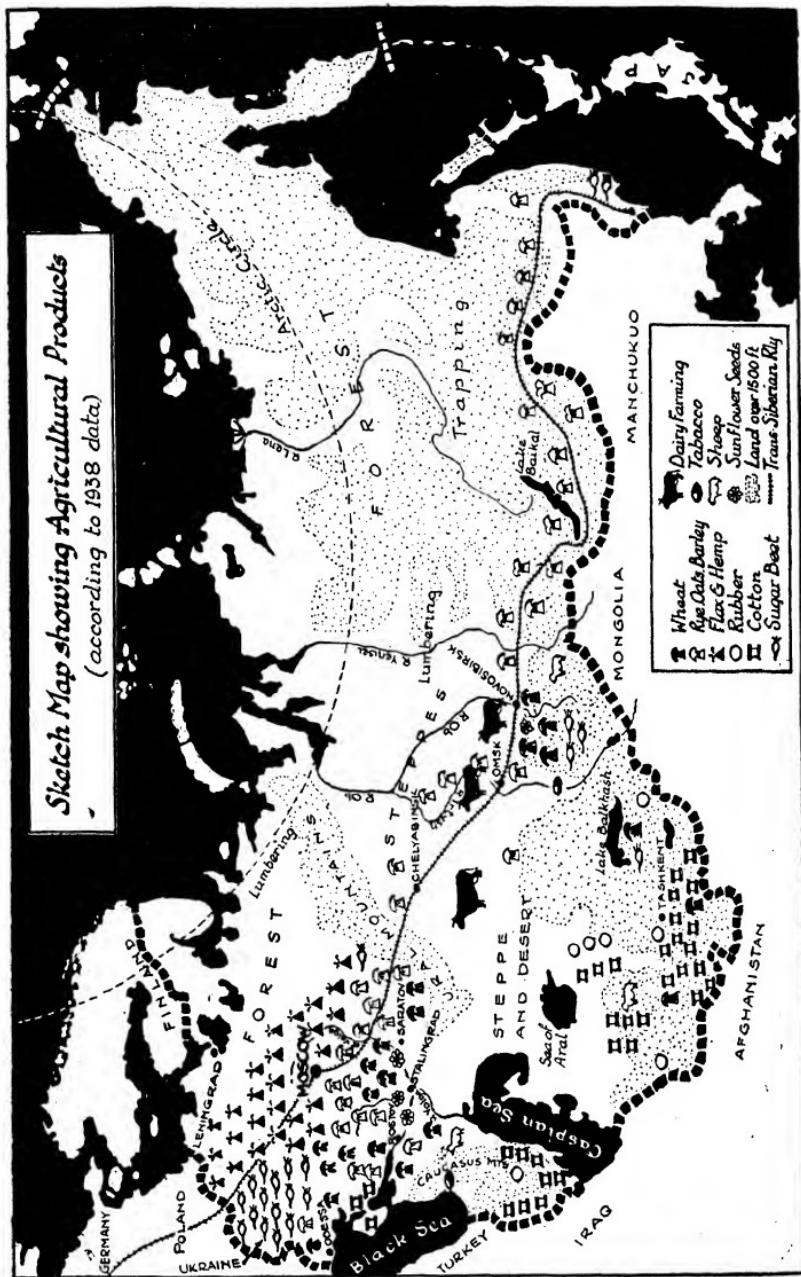
The word farm as applied to the U.S.S.R. is incorrect. The Russian *Sovietskoye Khozyaistvo*, or *Sovkhoz* for short, means "Soviet enterprise (agricultural)," while *Kolkhoznoe Khozyaistvo*, or *Kolkhoz*, means "collective enterprise (agricultural)." The Russian word for farm as we understand it in Britain is *Khutor*. A khutor was very similar to a farm in Britain, but not nearly so well run as a rule. It is important to understand that "farms" in the Soviet Union to-day are rural communities, varying in size, carrying on agricultural work either on co-operative lines or in a state enterprise.

### STATE FARMS

The State farms (*Sovkhozy*), which were some of the first to be set up, have been developed on land that was untilled in Tsarist Russia. Their chief purpose is to ensure grain, cattle, and industrial crops, such as cotton and sugar beet, for State needs—that is, for the Red Army and for reserves in emergencies. They have another important use, as experimental stations. Here scientists work on the improvement of existing stocks and plants, and in particular on the production of new varieties that will live in conditions strange for them. It is as a result of work on such experimental farms that, for example, wheat is now grown in the Far North, cherries ripen in the Arctic, cows survive the cold Arctic climate, and cotton grows in the Ukraine.

A State Farm is run like a big business. There is a director appointed by the State or Regional Board of Agriculture, with the necessary assistants. All the workers on the State Farm are paid wages, as in a factory. The management is also responsible for the nurseries, schools, and other social services such as adult schools, theatre, and health. The workers elect their own committees to run their leisure activities, and to aid the management's social services. Almost all the workers from the director downwards belong to the Union of Agricultural Workers.

*Sketch Map showing Agricultural Products*  
(according to 1938 data)



### COLLECTIVE FARMS

Collective Farms (*Kolkhozy*) have grown up in another way. Lenin and the other Soviet leaders knew that Russia could never grow enough to feed the people unless the peasants applied modern methods and machinery. This could not be done on the tiny, separated plots of land that made up most of the farms of the peasants. It required large farms, with modern machinery. There was great opposition from the



*S.C.R. Photo*

#### ON A COLLECTIVE FARM

The midday meal is enlivened by music. The food is often spread on table-cloths on the ground.

well-to-do farmers, who did not stop short of murder. In its turn the government, when it considered it necessary, treated them drastically. It took some time before the better off peasants, who had always thought in terms of a man working on his individual piece of land, making as much profit as he could, were convinced of the advantages of co-operative farming. When, however, they saw formerly poor and landless peasants becoming comparatively well off, they too began to join collective farms.

The government gave the collective farmers all possible help, lent them money, and sent them seeds. Tractor stations, with

tractors and specialists, were later set up for their use. In an incredibly short space of time, the face of the country underwent a great change. A traveller in the Soviet Union in 1928 would not have recognized the same country districts if he had returned in 1938. By 1938 there were 200,000 collective farms, and the original ones had increased in size and prosperity until they embraced several villages. It was clear that collective farming was successful, and with work and effort the well-being of the people was ensured.

Let us visit a typical Russian collective farm, to see how it works. We are met at the farm offices by the chairman, a young woman. This is not unusual in the U.S.S.R., where there is complete equality of men and women, however hard and specialized the job.

"Good morning, comrades," she says, smiling and shaking hands all round, as is customary in the U.S.S.R. "We have the Machine Tractor Station people here now, cutting the corn. Perhaps you would like to see them at work?"—and off we set.

On the way we pass the portable dormitory where the tractor drivers sleep during harvest. Until bedtime it is used as a club-room, and has a kitchen attached for the canteen.

"How many families have you on this farm?" we ask.

"About five hundred, but many farms have over six hundred; the size of collective farms varies a great deal. Some may be made up by as few as two hundred or even less families, from perhaps two villages, and others by nine hundred families, from perhaps six villages."

"Who controls the management of the farm?"

"All the members," was her reply. "Everyone who works on a Kolkhoz—a collective farm—is a Kolkhoznik, or collective-farmer—a woman is called Kolkhoznitsa, the feminine form. The adult members of the farm, at a general meeting, elect a committee of management, which appoints the chairman, the secretary, and the book-keeper. All important issues are decided by the general meeting: I mean such questions as whether we should spend considerable sums on new buildings,

new stock, or a hospital, and how much a worker shall receive in kind in addition to money payment. The people are expected to make suggestions for improvements and to criticize slackness. They don't all do it ! " she added.

" Do you make large profits ? " we asked.

" Oh, yes, more and more each year so far. You see, up to the present we have not succeeded in reaching the maximum harvests. Each year we buy better fertilizers and produce better seed, and we learn how to use our resources to the best advantage. Even though the weather may be against us sometimes, the returns promise more and more for future years. Of course, we have expenses, which we try to keep down by efficiency. All our tractor work is done by the Machine Tractor Station, and we pay them according to the work they do, generally in kind. For instance, for threshing we pay them by giving them about five per cent of the grain threshed."

" Does the government take a lot of your produce ? "

" We hand over to the government as tax a certain quantity, fixed by a commission, on a basis of the number of acres in the farm. In addition, we have to sell a certain amount to the government at a fixed price. All that is left over—and the harder and better we work, the more there is left—belongs to us. After paying all expenses and setting aside sums for social services, what is left is divided among the Kolkhozniks according to the amount of work done. People like the book-keeper or manager get a fixed salary and a bonus on production."

" Have you built all those farm buildings that we could see from the office out of the returns from the farm ? " was our next question.

" Yes," she replied. " Each year we spend a considerable sum on developing the farm."

The chairman continued; " We have a number of farms in our Kolkhoz, and we grow nearly everything we need in addition to our main crop, which is wheat. You shall taste some of our honey and eggs presently. We are very much

#### ON THE FAR

better off now than we were under  
I will take you to some of our house  
some of the farm people."

"Does everybody receive the same wages in the Soviet Union?" we asked, "no matter what skill is needed for his work or the amount of work he completes in his working time?"

"No," she answered. "The principle that we are working on now is 'from each according to his ability, to each according to the work performed.' On the collective farms, we take as a basis for wages the 'work-day unit.' This is the average amount of work that a Kolkhoznik can do in a day, and this amount varies according to the type of work done, the soil, the skill required, and the implements available. So that, you see, a quick, intelligent worker may have perhaps one and a half 'work-day units' placed to his credit for one working day. Then we divide our income according to the number of work-day units we each have to our credit. There is a bonus for good quality produce."

As she finished speaking the noise of the combine harvesters became a veritable roar. Such a scene might be met with in Canada or in the U.S.A., but to us from Britain it was astonishing.

There were six tremendous combine harvesters following each other across the plain. Each tractor follows in the track of its predecessor's *cutter*, so that when the procession has roared past us the straight edge of the standing corn has moved back some way from us.

On our way back to the collective farm offices, we learnt that all the members of the farm are divided into brigades, each with a brigade leader. These leaders are responsible for the work done by the members of their own section, and for inspection and noting the work-day units of each of the members.

The work of a brigade is changed after a year or two, so that a Kolkhoznik, man or woman, may become skilled in all the branches of their farm.

### THE COLLECTIVE FARM CLUB AND SCHOOLS

As we drew near to the offices, we passed again what appeared to be a village of new buildings.

"Yes," said the chairman to our enquiry, her eyes glowing with enthusiasm. "We are very proud of our club."

"Club?" we said. "Why, it looks like a grand new school."

"Oh, no. The schools are on the far side of the settlement."

The club was a large two-story building with big windows and a fine portico, modern in design, but simple, to harmonize with the surroundings.

"Of course," said the chairman, "not all collective farms have such fine club premises as ours, though a few have even finer ones. It is, as a matter of fact, the newest building here."

"But what sort of club is it? Who paid for it to be built, and who pays for its upkeep?" we asked.

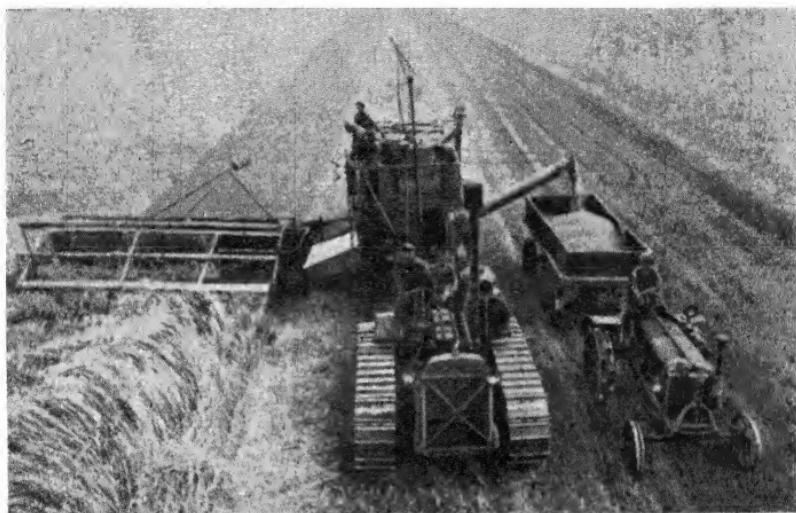
"It is every sort of club, for every kind of activity, and it was paid for and is kept up from the farm income. It is free to all members."

We had reached the building now, and went through the big doors under the portico. We passed through broad, airy corridors and were shown a science laboratory, music rooms, an art room, a reading-room, and a splendid library.

"Later on in the day," said the chairman, "this building will be full of people using their free time in whatever way interests them. Let us go and see some buildings that are full of life now."

And we went to the school group. As this collective farm was quite a large one, there were two schools, in addition to two kindergartens and a nursery (not all the mothers sent their children to the nursery or even to the kindergarten). Much of the burden of school costs is borne by the Soviet Government.

"Every one on this farm can read and write," we were told; "but in a peasant community of this size thirty years ago there would probably be no adult who could."

*S.C.R. Photo*

#### A COMBINE HARVESTER

The widespread use of the most up-to-date machinery, coupled with large-scale collective farming, has ensured food for the people.

One of the farm schools was called a Seven-year School, for children from seven to fourteen, and the other was a secondary school, for children from seven to seventeen. Children of fourteen who wanted to go to university and were good enough, went to the secondary school. The secondary school had an agricultural bias. All the Sixth Form—twenty-five of them—were going on to the university to become specialists. Many at fourteen went on to trade or professional schools in a city.

#### FROM BIRTH TO DEATH

We next visited the children's nurseries, one of which was permanent and the others temporary for the summer only. The chairman of the collective farm once again explained to us that the nurseries were entirely supported by the Kolkhoz. She also told us that the old people were paid pensions from the farm income and that those who were sick or had had accidents were cared for free.

"Have you got a hospital as well?" we asked.

"No. We have two doctors and unqualified assistants called Feldshers. Our country is very short of doctors. We have a clinic, but hospital cases are sent to a large hospital twenty miles away. Some collective farms have their own small hospitals."

"Then the members of the Kolkhoz, through their special committees, look after each other from the time they are born until they die?"

"Yes, that is roughly the case, but you must realize that in any community things may occasionally go wrong. Children who have done well at school and who wish to go on to a university or a music, art, or drama school may receive help with their fees from the farm funds. As a matter of fact, quite a lot of our children are interested in science, perhaps because of the travelling science museum."

"Do you find that many of the children want to remain to work on the farm?"

"Oh, yes, the great majority. Many of those that go off to a university come back."

We learnt later that six million boys and girls between 13 and 18 helped with the 1943 war-time harvest. During war-time, of course, most of the farm work was done by women.

### LOCAL CRAFTS

"Now," said the chairman, "let's go and visit some of the collective farmers in their homes. We've had many invitations, for our people are very hospitable; but I don't suppose we shall get far."

As we walked down the village street we passed a low building from which came the whirr of some sort of engine. The chairman saw our interest and told us what it was.

"That is the workshop," she said, "where our carpentering and most of our furniture-making is done. We are more self-supporting than would have seemed possible. That is the aim of the collective farm, to satisfy all its own ordinary day-

to-day needs as well as to help the needs of the country. We produce much embroidery and we make china clay toys. Our peasants have been craftsmen too for centuries."

### THE COLLECTIVE FARMER AT HOME

All the old peasants' cottages and dirty, smoky hovels that made up this village in earlier times have been pulled down, and attractive two-story houses built in their stead, each house having two or three flats. On this farm they all have electric light, though on many of the smaller ones the homes are still lighted with paraffin.

" Each family owns its own home, and receives in addition a plot of land for growing its own fruit and vegetables, and for keeping its own cows and poultry. No rent is paid by the farmer for the farm lands, house, or plot. The farm lands and buildings belong to the Kolkhoz, while the farmer's home belongs to him.

" On his own plot of land, which varies from one to five acres on poor land, the collective farmer can grow what he pleases and keep any animals possible. These are his own, and he can do as he pleases with them. You will find that every peasant keeps poultry, for Russians are very fond of eggs and chickens, and specially fond of ducks. Nearly everybody has a cow or goat for milk, and some pigs."

We are visiting the Petrov family. Pyotr Kirilovich Petrov, the father, is a brigade leader on the farm and has not been home from work very long. After we have washed, we meet the children, home from school and eager for their meal. The samovar is singing, and Marya, who is fourteen, is just putting the finishing touches to the table. We are fascinated by the samovar, and Marya explains how it works. It looks like a large tea urn with a chimney.

" Through the centre of the samovar, from top to bottom, runs a cylinder. This is filled with burning charcoal, and heats the water in the outer container. Tea is made in the teapot," she continued, making the tea as she spoke, " and then the teapot is stood on the chimney of the samovar to keep

it hot. May I offer you your tea?" or in Russian "*Nalit Bam chai?*"

"*Pozhalu'sta*—please," we reply.

Marya poured a little tea from the pot into a glass, and filled the glass with water from the samovar. We are pressed to make a good meal from the various cold dishes on the table, such as smoked ham eaten raw as on the continent, pickled cucumber, smoked fish, garlic sausage, etc., etc., finishing up (this is, of course, in peace-time) with sweets. We notice our friends eat spoonfuls of jam from a little plate beside the glass with their tea. Before we leave the table we praise the meal and thank our hostess, and at last, tired but content, we leave the collective farm, not before we have been loaded with gifts of melons and other fruit and flowers. As we walk along we can hear snatches from the wireless or the strains of a balalaika coming from cottages we pass.

### THE FRUITS OF THE EARTH

What can be harvested from the soil of the frozen lands in the North, from those lands that were swamps and deserts, from forests and mountain-sides, from the banks of the great rivers, from the hot sunny lands of Georgia, Armenia, and Central Asia?

Trying to get a picture of the agricultural products of the Soviet Union, we learn that Soviet scientists and peasants are altering the face of nature. "We will help nature," they said, "to feed the people in the Arctic and the people in the desert. We will give plants new homes and make them grow." Like their colleagues in other countries, they are succeeding to a surprising extent. Wheat grows farther north than anybody believed possible. In the Arctic they have large conservatories surrounded by snow where they grow lettuces, cucumbers, and radishes.

By experimenting with a plant, the kok-sagyz, a near cousin of the dandelion, the U.S.S.R. has succeeded in setting up very large rubber collective farms, increasing in number and size every year. It was first grown in Kirghizia, then spread

to other hot Asiatic lands, and now it is grown in Siberia, which had seemed quite impossible.

Tobacco is grown in Armenia and Georgia, and the war needs stimulated the people to grow it in unlikely places, as for instance, high up in the Allaverdi Hills in Armenia at the "First of May Collective Farm." Wonders have been performed in the desert lands by hard work, great patience, and science. Canals, such as the Ferghana Canal mentioned in another chapter, the Palvon-Shavat, and Kelif canals in Turkmenistan, and the Samur-Divichi in Azerbaidjhan, have made millions of acres fertile, with a vast increase in the numbers and size of cotton collective farms.

Uzbekistan has just finished building a great "sea": a



S.C.R. Photo

EXAMINING THE COTTON HARVEST IN UZBEKISTAN  
On a Collective farm.

reservoir that will make fertile 162,000 acres of formerly arid land. It is the Katta-Kurgan Reservoir, started in 1941, and built to hold 668 million cubic metres of water. This part of Uzbekistan is very interesting for its remains of ancient villages and long-buried fortresses. Along this valley marched Genghiz Khan with his warriors, followed by Tamerlaine and his hordes.

Almost every kind of grain, fruit, and vegetable grows in the Soviet Union. The exceptions up to the present are bananas, cocoa beans, and coffee.

Across the whole of the northern lands, called the taiga, spread forests. The U.S.S.R. is the world's chief source of timber. Travelling through the forests you come across settlements of huts and factories, with the usual dining-room and club. These are the timber co-operatives. In the spring the cut timber is floated down the rivers to the sea.

Next to the timber belt is the flax and wheat belt. The U.S.S.R. produced in 1938 a quarter of the world's wheat, sixty per cent of the world's flax, and a quarter of the world's sugar beet. She was fourth in the list of world cotton producers.

In Abkhazia grow eucalyptus and tung trees (for tung oil), bamboos, and camphor and cork trees.

In the Crimea, Georgia, and some of the Asian republics grow such fruits as oranges, lemons, grapefruit, apricots and peaches, figs, and pomegranates.

There are thousands of vineyards in the Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, and elsewhere. The Ukraine grows acres and acres of delicious melons.

Every year more land is brought under cultivation. In the spring of 1944 over 200,000 tractors went to work. Every year there is an increase in cattle of all kinds. The collective farmer can look ahead with security.

Great as these achievements are when we compare them with the conditions before 1917, there is very much still to be done before all the rural population reaches a high standard of comfort. There are still areas where progress has been slow, chiefly because they are so sparsely populated and so

far removed from advanced centres. The war will certainly have hindered progress in housing, in clothing, and in many other ways. The collective farmers will have to work very hard indeed in the post-war years. They will have to fight slackness and inefficiency and bureaucracy. Through the war, they, like others, have lost many of those comforts that they had only just won. But they know that if they are prepared to put their shoulders to the wheel they will soon be again on the road to a comfortable life.

## CHAPTER SIX

### IN THE FACTORY

WE have talked about the tremendous changes that have taken place in the countryside since 1917, and the enthusiasm these changes aroused among the farmers. Now let us turn to those workers whose lives are spent in cities, in factories, and in mines. When the question of industrialization was considered by the government soon after the Revolution, it was realized that priority must be given to the production of heavy machinery and machine tools, industries which hardly existed before 1917, and without which the U.S.S.R. could never produce either the means of defence or the innumerable manufactured articles necessary for a comfortable and pleasant life.

Another urgent necessity was coal, without which modern industry on a great scale is impossible at present.

Coal was essential to provide power in factory plants which were to provide machinery that could use turf or be driven by electricity. Search by numerous geological expeditions brought to light many new coal basins and by 1940 the U.S.S.R. was mining more than five times as much coal as in 1913. Coal was found within the Arctic Circle and in the Far Eastern lands. They found vast stores of coal in the Znetz basin in the Altai mountains. These new mines, with the mines that were already known in the Don and Donetz river



A WOMAN CHEMIST

used to hew daily from the coal face was five tons, an amount much below that being hewn in advanced industrial countries. There was much propaganda for increased output.

#### STAKHANOV THE COAL HEWER

Then came one of those exciting, seemingly impossible things that are valuable in arousing the enthusiasm of thousands of people who have drifted into thinking of their work just as a job to be done and no more. A young man at the Central Irmino Colliery, filled with a desire to help his country, found he could introduce improvements down the mine that would greatly increase the output. This keen young miner, Stakhanov, who was the head of a section, rearranged his shift and divided up the jobs to be done so that no time was wasted. On the first day, in a single six-hour shift, this team hewed 102 tons of coal instead of the usual 5 tons. That roused everybody, and friendly rivalry grew up between the sections.

areas, assured the Soviet Union of a fuel supply that was only waiting to be mined. Shafts were bored, and collieries opened, but even so the supply was far behind the demands of the factories, which in their turn were increasing rapidly in numbers and size. The average amount of coal that a man

The next day another section-leader, supported by his team, hewed 115 tons in the same time, and the next day another hewed 119 tons, and in a few days the record was over 150 tons in six hours.

Stakhanov, stimulated by the others, made several alterations and improvements, and soon hewed 200 tons in one shift.

The newspapers were full of the achievements of the miners and loud in their praise. Workers in factories, shoemakers, farmers, lumberjacks, gold-miners, everybody looked at each other in amazement, and said, "Five tons to two hundred tons!" However, it set many of them off to try for records in their work. As record after record was published the movement to increase production, to which was added a movement for lower costs, spread wider and wider. Soon section challenged section and factory challenged factory to produce the most and reduce costs. Thus was born the Stakhanovite movement, in which thousands of workers are out to find ways to improve their work, and are, too, ready to teach others. Many of these leaders of production have been awarded State honours and have been acclaimed as heroes. It is from these Stakhanovites that many directors of factories and State production departments are appointed. Many of them have been elected by the workers as their members of the Supreme Soviet.

#### YOUTH ENTERS THE FACTORY

To help young people to enter factories as skilled workers, to play their part in building up the country, they are given special training. After reaching the age of fourteen, they enter the special schools described in Chapter Four. After completing their four years with a State enterprise, they can change their jobs if they wish, or they can go to a Municipal enterprise or Collective Farm, or train for a profession. There are also factory apprentice schools for those boys and girls who do not go to the factory until they are 16, and technical schools for training lower grade specialists. The higher grade

specialists in the factories are trained in specialized Technical Universities.

### FACTORY CONDITIONS

A factory manager explains the difference between the way a factory and a Kolkhoz are run : " You see, a collective farm is the enterprise belonging to the farmers, whilst all factories of any size are either State or Municipal enterprises. I was not elected by the workers in the factory, but appointed by the Trust that is responsible for the articles that this factory produces. Factories are more like State Farms, and in both the workers are paid wages. Bonuses are paid for good work but there is no sharing out of the profits."

" What do you mean by the Trust that is responsible for this factory ? "

" The Commissariats (ministries), who are each responsible for a branch of the country's life, divide their sphere of activities into Departments or Boards, which have to carry out the plans finally decided upon by the State Planning Commission. These Boards or Departments are known as Trusts. It is the latter who appoint the directors of their factories. The workers elect a committee, which may always discuss with the director aspects of the work and the conditions. If the workers think that the director is holding up production, they can send in a report to the Trust, which will be very carefully examined, and if their case is proved the director may be dismissed."

" What is this State Planning Commission ? "

" It is a very large body of experts with a great many departments which is responsible for drawing up plans not only for industry, but for agriculture, for education, in fact for every aspect of our life. Each republic and smaller unit has its own Planning Commission. Factories have their planning committees. When all information about available resources in materials and labour has been collected, it is balanced with the needs of the country in the order of priority, and draft plans are drawn up. These are circulated to the

appropriate lower planning commissions, who in their turn divide the plans among their respective Trusts. The process of division goes on until each factory and farm receives its draft plan. These draft plans are then discussed and returned with comments and suggestions to the next higher planning body until they reach Gosplan, who then draws up the final plans which it is our duty to fulfil. All plans are subject to discussion by and approval of the Supreme Soviet."

"How very complicated!" we reply.

"It is complicated," says the director, "but in the end it saves much waste and it helps us to keep every section of the people in full employment."

"Do you have trade unions in the Soviet Union?"

"We most certainly do," he replied. "Membership is not compulsory, but about ninety per cent of the workers are members of their particular unions. As a matter of fact, they are very important bodies, for it is the unions in consultation with the Trust that fix wages. They also look after all insurance payments."

As we are passing through a hallway, our attention is drawn to the wall-newspaper.

"Sometimes it is very critical," our guide remarks, "and I don't escape criticism! When necessary it is very stern about shirkers and bureaucrats. There are also, as you see, cartoons and poems. The workers elect their editorial board, which sometimes has difficulty in getting in contributions. There are all sorts of committees among the workers: one is a special health committee to look after the women workers, another is a canteen committee to supervise the kitchen and the service. This committee is also responsible for special diets—they are sometimes necessary, you know, in certain kinds of industry. The sports committee is very important here."

"How many hours a day do Russians work?" we ask next.

"In 1940 the working day was lengthened from seven to eight hours, except for workers in dangerous occupations, where it is six hours. In the war people worked far longer hours, but



S.C.R. Photo

**REHOUSING THE WORKERS : MOSCOW**  
A block of newly erected flats in a new suburb.

it was voluntary and paid at overtime rates. During the war, too, people gave up their holidays."

"And what about accidents?"

"All machines must be guarded. We have several doctors on the spot, as this is rather a large factory, and a dispensary where the workers can be treated. All workers are insured against accidents and illness by the State. Workers can have the advice of specialists free, there is a maternity home for women workers, and we have our own sanatorium by the sea. Workers undergo periodical medical examinations. A special department of the Commissariat of Health is responsible for factory hygiene and the consequences of disregarding regulations are severe."

The new factories have very up-to-date machinery, some of which comes from Britain, some from the U.S.A., but most is now produced in the U.S.S.R. Wherever possible processes are mechanized and made automatic by the use of the photo-electric cell and other modern devices. The conveyor belt is

increasingly employed where it is practicable. In the hundreds of research laboratories in the Soviet Union, physicists, chemists, and engineers of every kind are experimenting to evolve new methods, to improve machines and tools, so that production may increase in quality and quantity and the work may be made easier. During the war these scientists worked in the factories for part of their time so that they could give advice and help on the spot. Soviet scientists make use of the ideas of experts of other countries. For example, by developing and improving on the ideas of British Sir William Ramsay, the Russians are now able in some mines to turn coal into gas underground, so that no miners are needed.

#### FACTORY FACILITIES

By a Government instruction a sum round about two per cent of the factory's turnover (that is the value of the goods produced) must go to what is known as the culture fund. This helps to pay for nurseries, kindergartens, the factory restaurant, the factory club, and a variety of other amenities.

In the smaller, old-fashioned factories the facilities will be very modest. Such a factory may not even have a club of its own. This will be the case, too, for small municipal factories. In those that employ several thousand or more workers—and these are the factories for which Trusts are responsible—the facilities are very good indeed. It is not unusual for a big enterprise to have two or more nurseries, three kindergartens, and its own maternity home for its married women workers. When architects design plans for new enterprises they have to include all these things, and houses for the workers in addition. Such a big enterprise as the Kharkov Tractor Plant was before the War, or the Kirov Works in Leningrad, or the Ziss Automobile Works in Moscow, will have a very fine club indeed, with provision for every kind of hobby, physical, intellectual, or artistic. These clubs also have children's sections, not only because there are still not enough youth clubs, but because very often parents and children will wish to go out together. Arrived at the club, they separate

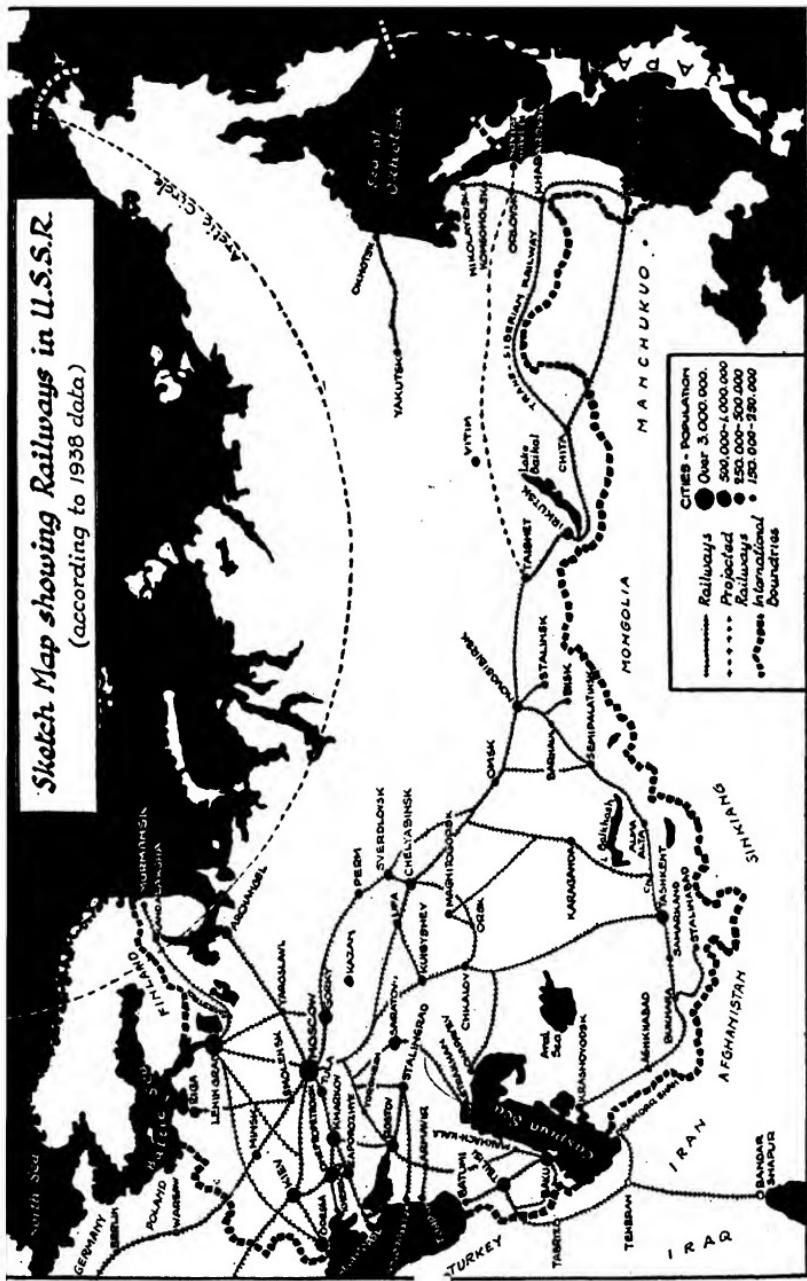
according to their interests, but they can visit each other if they wish.

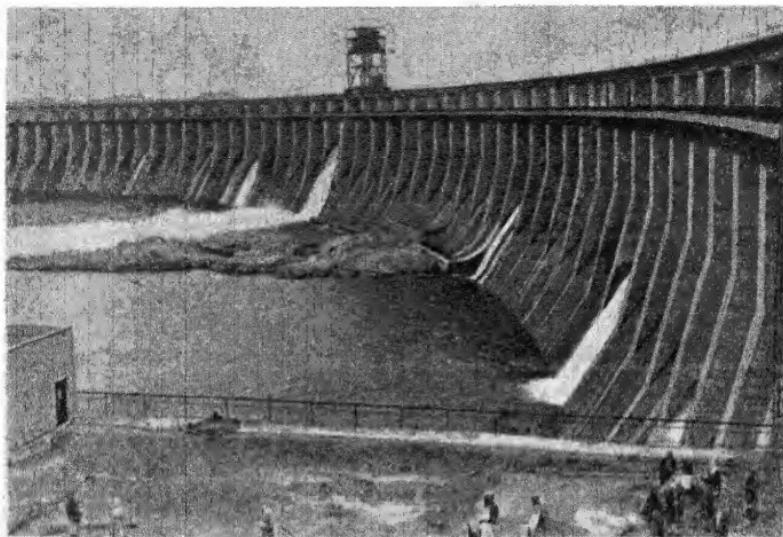
### PRODUCTION

We have seen how the Russian works, now let us look at what he produces. It is estimated that in 1940 the Soviet Union manufactured 523,000 tractors, and became the world's greatest producer of agricultural machinery, and that she mined more than 160 million tons of coal, taking the fourth place amongst the world's coal-producers. In the manufacture of goods wagons and machinery, the U.S.S.R. held second place ; in the manufacture of steel, third place. Her steel output rose to 18·4 million tons by 1940, four and a half times as much as she produced in 1913. She is the third highest producer in the world of electricity (twenty times as much in 1938 as in 1913). In 1940 the Soviet merchant fleet carried 1,350,000 tons, an increase of 400 per cent over 1928. Her telephones had increased by 1936 to over 2 million, which was an increase in telephone lines of nearly 1 million miles between 1928 and 1936. The mileage of railways has increased by about 25 per cent. New railways have been built, to link up the centres of production. Existing lines were improved, as the Trans-Siberia Railway, which is now double-tracked instead of single. The great military roads, leading for the most part out of Moscow, are fine, straight, five-lane highways, and the road mileage generally has been increased by over 83 per cent since 1918. The Soviet Union has gone a considerable way towards linking up its great centres by waterways. The White Sea is linked by canal with the Baltic Sea, the Volga River has been linked to Moscow by a canal. Moscow is also connected by water with Leningrad, and is sometimes known as the city of five seas. The water power of the U.S.S.R. has also been used for the generation of electricity. Many hydro-electric power plants have been built, and new ones are being set up. One of the biggest, the Dnieper Dam, was put out of action to prevent the Germans using it.

Sketch Map showing Railways in U.S.S.R.

(according to 1938 data)





S.C.R. Photo

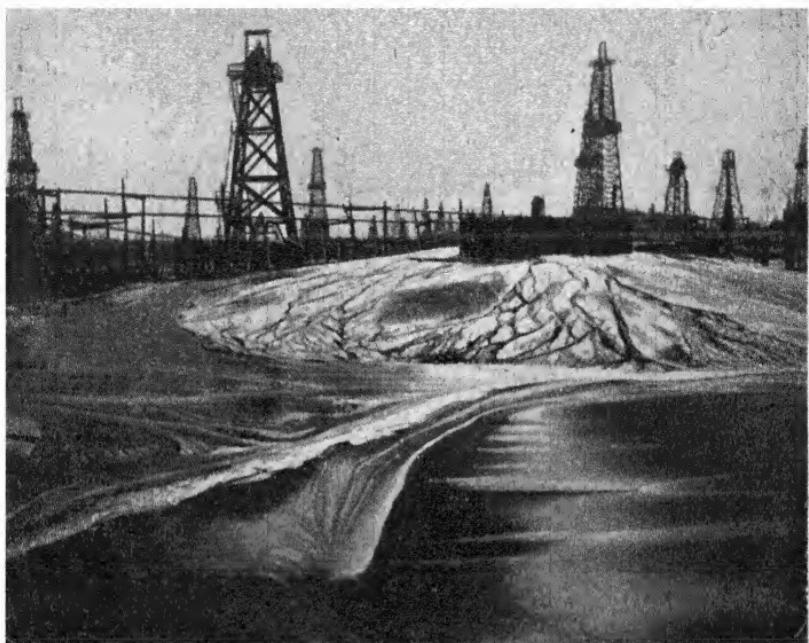
### THE DNIEPER DAM

This was the great achievement of the First Five Year Plan. It was partially destroyed to prevent the Germans using it.

There are also many airlines throughout the Soviet Union. Prior to the foundation of the Soviet Union, Russia relied on the Caucasus, and in particular on Baku, for her supplies of oil, but since that time oil has been discovered in many places, from the Arctic Ocean in the North to Turkmenistan in the South, in Sayansk and Yablonoi Mountains on the Mongolian frontier, and in Sakhalin in the Far East. Near the Ural Mountains are oil wells and the Urals are very rich in iron ore, of which the Soviet Union is the second greatest producer in the world.

In 1940 the U.S.S.R. produced over 34 million tons of oil and gas, and that was three and a half times as much as in 1913.

When considering the industrial achievements of the Soviet Union, we have compared them with Tsarist Russia in 1913. It would be wrong to compare them with Britain or the U.S.A., countries that have been industrialized for nearly a century. All the industrial development described took place in less

*S.C.R. Photo***OIL DERRICKS, BAKU**

The oil in the region around Baku extends under the water of the Caspian Sea.

than a quarter of a century ; for it was not till the Civil War and Intervention was over that industrialization began on any scale. These great successes were achieved at the cost of much privation. In the early years after the Revolution the people were underfed, very badly housed, and badly clothed. They began to reap the reward of their sacrifices in 1932, at the end of the first Five Year Plan. At the end of the Second Five Year Plan they were better off still, with plenty of good food, with housing improving, clothing improving, and many luxuries appearing.

When World War II broke out in 1939, the Soviet Union knew sooner or later she would be attacked too. The standard of living could not continue to rise, for the production of munitions of war had to be increased. The war in the

Soviet Union brought that country terrible destruction. Over an area many times bigger than Great Britain, industry, agriculture, whole towns and villages, were destroyed by the enemy before he retreated.

To restore all the industries, the cities, and villages that the enemy destroyed will demand great sacrifices again from the people. Once again the people will have to go without luxuries, and even some necessities ; they will have to live in crowded homes and wear clothing of poor material. But this time the period of sacrifice will not be long. Already in 1945 industry, agriculture, and housing have been restored in many large provinces. The people know what is expected of them and they look forward to the future with full confidence.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE RED ARMY

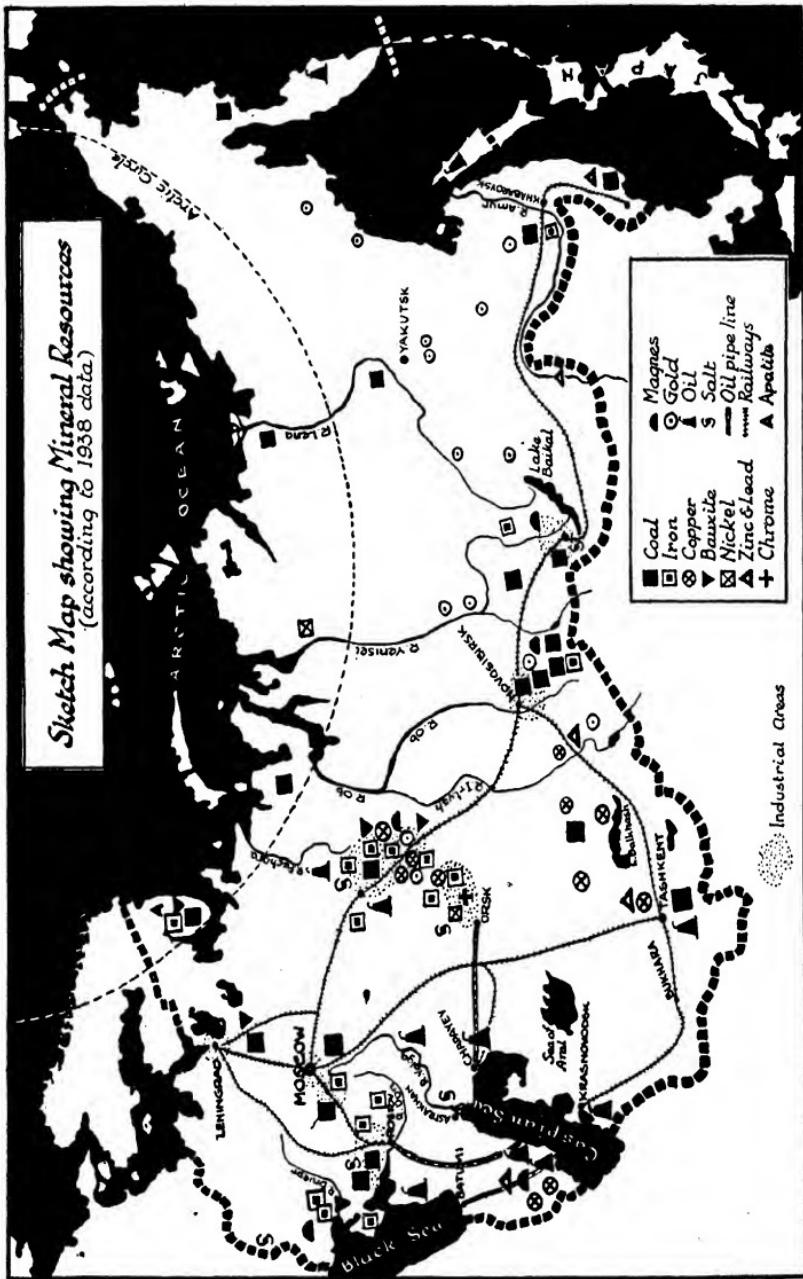
Moscow was in holiday mood, for it was May Day and there was to be the great military parade. Afterwards there would be a parade of civilians from all the nationalities and in the evening there would be music and dancing in the parks and squares.

But we are only concerned with the Red Army here. It was a warm, sunny day with gentle winds caressing your cheek. In the very short spring, almost overnight, winter had disappeared and summer had arrived.

From every corner people were hurrying to the Red Square to take their places for the parade. Let us, in imagination, go too. Our place is on the stands for special guests. A militiaman (policeman) scrutinizes our tickets very carefully. They are in order and we pass on.

Soon the Square is filled with units of the Red Army, which a friendly neighbour tells us is only the beginning of the parade. Suddenly there is a stir among the crowds. Stalin has arrived, followed by Kalinin, the President of the U.S.S.R.,

**Sketch Map showing Mineral Resources**  
(according to 1938 data)



and other members of the Government. Stalin is greeted with tremendous applause.

Again there is quiet—only the murmur of the spectators, and the restless pawing of a horse can be heard. Then a tremendous shout goes up. Timoshenko on his white charger leads the parade. Now it has begun. Companies and regiments march past. Infantrymen looking spick and span in their summer uniforms of white, carry rifles and tommy guns. Artillery, light and heavy, rumbles by, drawn by sleek well-kept horses. Tanks of all sizes career across the Square, some go so swiftly we hardly see what they are like. Here come signallers, followed by search-light units and Ack-Ack guns.

The clapping of the crowd increases. We hear the hooves of the cavalry horses. Now they are sweeping into the Square. How wonderful are those horses and how alive the men ! As they go past Stalin, out flash the sabres from the long scabbards, and away they go glinting in the sunlight. As each unit passes through the Square it cheers its leaders on the stands. The cheers are taken up by those behind, and by the spectators until there is a mighty reverberation of sound, rolling on and on as though it would never stop.

We are caught up in the excitement so that we hardly breathe.

If we listen to the people round us we hear scraps of conversation. "That's our Lyosha. He passed his exam. in the tanks first class last week." "Look—there's Andrei on that horse there. Did you know that cavalry now carry rifles and tommy guns, and all kinds of mechanical things ?" says fourteen-year-old Sima, showing off his knowledge.

"Oh yes, and they'll soon have aero-engines fixed to the horses' tails to make them fly," answers Vova the class comic man.

"Funny, aren't you ?" replies Sima disdainfully.

A grey-haired man, who has been watching the parade with shining eyes, notices we are foreigners and asks us what we think of the Red Army. He remembers it in 1918, before it could be called an army.

"Yes," he says, "our Red Army is the youngest in the world. How poor we were in those days, how starving, and how ragged! I ought to know, I joined up to fight for the people's freedom in 1918. We didn't have enough rifles, and you could almost count the tanks on the fingers of your hand. We didn't have enough of anything, and now look at our army—the best equipped, and most modern in the world—and all done in twenty-six years! And you know who did it? Stalin—our Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin. Well, of course, others helped too, but he did the most.

"You haven't seen our paratroops. Our country was the first to use them. In 1936 we showed them to the whole world, and most of the world thought it was a joke. Now they know better."

We air our Russian and say, "Spahsibo Boilshoye" (Thank you very much), and "Dahsvidainya" (good-bye) to our friend.

Now let us visit a Red Army club, this time in Kharkov, and talk to the men and officers. We hope to have many of our questions answered here.

A wide flight of steps takes us into the large entrance lobby. On either side there are cloakrooms, where we leave our coats and hats. In the U.S.S.R. it is considered bad manners to keep outdoor clothes on indoors when visiting any place.

Here's a young woman sitting in the corridor. Let's ask her what she's doing here.

"My husband is a commander, and as his wife I have a right to join in everything at the club. I'm waiting for the gymnasium to open. We have ballet class there."

"Does your husband learn to dance ballet?" we ask her in surprise.

"No, he's not interested, but other men and commanders are, and wives can join the class."

"Please, what is a commander?"

"Oh, that is what you in England call an officer. Ours are called commanders, but we have titles for the different ranks. We begin with Junior Lieutenant, or in Russian, Mladshiy

Lyotenant, followed by Senior Commander, or Starshiy Lyotenant. We don't have 'captains' in the army, only in the navy and air force. But we have majors, and colonels, and generals, and the highest rank—marshals. We have major-generals, but we call them general-majors, the opposite to you."

"Do you have non-commissioned officers as we do in Britain?"

"Oh yes, we call them junior and senior sergeant, or mladshiy and starshiy sarzhahnt. No, our officers don't have batmen. They have to look after themselves, except, of course, generals and marshals."

"Is yours a conscript army in peace-time, too?" we ask.

"Yes, every male on reaching the age of 19 is liable. But they don't all get called up. In peace-time the country doesn't need as big an army as in war-time. Everybody has some military training, workers in volunteer organizations, and students in their universities."

"Since you seem to know so much about the Red Army, can you tell us how men become officers?"

"There are many ways of becoming officers. There are military schools, something like those you have in England, only in the Soviet Union boys are taken at the age of eight. Boys whose fathers have been killed in the war, whether they were officers or privates, have first chance. When they finish at these Suvorov schools, called after the famous Russian General Suvorov, they go to a military academy to finish their training. Then often the boys who leave school at fourteen or seventeen, and who want to take up the army as their profession, apply for a place in military schools, which belong to the Ministry of Education, or, as the Russians call it, the Commissariat of Education.

"But the majority of the officers come from the ranks of the privates. A Red Army man who shows interest in his work, is intelligent, shows that he's smart, and can get over any difficulties, will be asked by his superior officer whether he would not like to have a commission. If he answers yes, he serves an extra year in the army, three years instead of two.

Then he is sent to a training school. All military schools and academies are free. Indeed, students who are married and have families, as is often the case, receive grants of money during their training."

"Is army pay very high in the Soviet Union?"

"On the contrary. Our Red Army men receive very little pay. That is because everything they need is provided for them free. Their families are well looked after. There are very good allowances for all children under sixteen. Their rent is very little."

We are much impressed with the club. It is very big, with its own theatre, concert hall, and library, and dozens of rooms for chess, for study, and for play: There is a large, pleasant dining-room where we are given refreshment.

"Are there many such clubs?" we ask.

"Every garrison town has one. Moscow's Red Army Club is much finer than this. In Moscow the Red Army has its own theatre. And do you know what was the first play performed there? Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'

"Why do so many Red Army men play chess?" we ask.

"Well, partly because they like the game, and partly because it is very useful training for a soldier."

Here's a Red Army man just back from a two months' course in camp. We will ask him about the training there. We are introduced: "Korshavin, Oleg Stepanovich," he says; and then "Ochein priyatno." As is the Russian custom when being introduced, he says his surname, followed by his name and patronymic, and then, "Glad to meet you." Quite soon, as is the custom, we will be calling him Oleg Stepanovich. (A patronymic is the father's name with a suffix added—ovich for a man, and ovna for a woman; e.g. Robert Robertovich, Mary Robertovna.)

"What was your training like?" we ask. .

"Hard," replies Oleg Stepanovich. "Feel my muscles. We are trained to be tough and agile, to go without food and drink for hours, and sometimes for days, to do forced marches.

Then we have to learn how to meet tanks. That is the hardest of all. At first you're terrified of the monster that comes crashing towards you. You're quite sure you'll be too late with the grenade, or your rifle will miss. Sometimes you can't bear it and you run. Next time you're ashamed and you grit your teeth and clutch the grenade hard, as the monster rolls on. Then you throw and . . . you've hit it! After that it's easier to control yourself. Then you are trained how to overcome several enemies by yourself. You need to use all your brains and wit for that. But it's pleasant in the evening after a day's hard training. You make so many friends—and you meet and talk about your home town and family, and work. Often the secretary of the leisure activities organizes a camp-fire evening. In a large clearing we light a fire. Men and officers sit round in a ring. Presently the choir begins songs that the Red Army sings on the march. The choir can dance, too. Soon they are whirling and tapping, and on bent knees shooting their legs out—the gopahk it is called. Balalaikas and mandolines join the music. Faster it goes, and faster go the dancers. Many who were sitting have joined in. Someone throws more branches on the fire. The music stops and all sit down. While this is going on the amateur actors have been getting ready. Their producer, like a conjuror, has put up some properties, and they give scenes from a comedy. On the last day there is a great gathering.

"Each unit elects a committee for all the leisure work. The committee then elects a chairman and a secretary. There are many sub-committees for different activities. For instance, the wall-newspaper has its editorial committee."

We ask to hear more of the wall-newspaper.

"It's a very large sheet on which we paste stories, articles, jokes, cartoons, or drawings sent in by men and officers. If a man is lazy, or slack, or untidy, we write about him in the wall-newspaper. If our officer is no good we write about him too. Every platoon and company has its own wall-newspaper. In addition, many regiments have their own newspapers, which they print on their own presses. In the war, the press

travelled on a lorry right up to the front line, and papers have often been printed under fire.

"In the summer the theatre companies from the big towns visit the army in every part of the country, in the Far East as well as in the West, and give plays and operas, and ballets. They visit the battleships, too, and perform on deck for the sailors.

"In the war they have been playing and singing to the men right up in the front line. Once a singer was performing to a company and the enemy started shelling. She went on singing until the order was given for an attack. Another time an actor visited some men in their dug-out. They were so near to the enemy that he had to recite in a whisper, so as not to be heard by them.

"One of the most beloved entertainers in the Red Army is Lydia Ruslanova, who sings Russian folk-songs. She once sang to a company of men, between 100 and 150 infantry-men. They were wearing wide white trousers, white shirts, and white turban-like hats, wound round their heads. That was snow camouflage. Their faces were black. On their shoulders were hung automatics. They had just come out of battle and in fifteen minutes were to launch another attack. Lydia sang, one song after another. Then a command was given. The men vanished into the woods. A minute later the forest trembled with the endless crack of rifles. The attack had begun. Then a surgeon came up to Lydia, and asked her to sing to a severely wounded soldier."

As we were talking to our friends another Red Army man came up.

Oleg at once gave him a smart salute. We noticed that he had epaulettes on his shoulders. From this we guessed and rightly, that he was an officer. There was some difference in the dress. Both wore shiny top-boots with their breeches tucked in. Both wore their tunics over knee breeches. The officer's was, however, better and smarter, and he wore a Sam Browne leather belt, and shoulder straps. On the collar of the tunic, which comes high up the neck, the officer had various

ornaments, which, with those on his shoulder straps, showed his rank.

In the winter the men wear quilted jackets, wadding-lined, and felt boots called *valenki*. That is the only way an army can keep warm on service in Russia. As we stand there, more men come up and they all salute the officer smartly. We notice when they talk to him they call him "Comrade Colonel," or in Russian "Tovarishch Polkovnik." We learn that the customary way to address any officer is to use the word Comrade before his rank. The officers use it to the men, too.

We are introduced to Igor (pronounced Eegor) Samoilovich. He comes from a village in the Ukraine. He tells us that when he returned after his two years in the army the whole village turned out with a band and banners to meet him. Then he was elected a member of the village council. It was rather a backward village and he found it none too easy a task to rouse up the easy-going villagers. They all listened to him with respect and for a long time they found excuses for not adopting his suggestions.

The war has shown how good the training of the Red Army has been. Stalin insists that bravery without training and intelligence is of no value in a war. There is very special attention paid to initiative in the Red Army.

Hundreds of times on that front of 2000 miles, an individual soldier, private or officer, saved a situation on which much depended.

Soviet women had no separate organization in the war-time Red Army, but they served in the same capacities as women in Britain, but attached to each unit. In addition, front-line nurses brought the wounded in from the battlefield. There were, too, a small number of women who fought with arms. There were some brilliant women pilots and navigators of bombers and fighters. When a country is invaded, women, as well as men, fight for their land and their liberty with arms.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE SOVIET CITIZEN AT LEISURE

“FOR goodness sake, Vova, turn off that wireless. Papa and I both want a quiet evening. And that jazz! It wouldn’t be so bad if it were Tchaikovski or Mozart—but that jazz!”

This may be spoken by a mother in Russian, or Ukrainian, or Georgian, just as it may be spoken by a mother in English. Being at leisure means that people do what they like, or sometimes what their family allows them to do. There are those, particularly in wartime, who, after a long and tiring day, are glad to have a quiet evening at home, to read or to do the little jobs that have been put off for a free evening. Father decides that he will really mend that lamp, Mother that she will finish the cloth she began to embroider a long time ago, or perhaps that she really must darn stockings. What is to be done about Vova, the jazz “fan”? Fortunately, in the flat over the way, where Manya, another jazz “fan” lives, it appears that nobody objects to jazz, for Vova can hear the wireless. As Manya is a friend of his, Vova decides to call on her.

“Do come in,” says Manya. “Mother and father have gone to the theatre. When I’ve put the youngsters to bed I shall be free and we can have a good session. We can try all the different stations.” Manya is also a wireless enthusiast. The set in her home was constructed by her in the school radio club.

#### HOLIDAYS

It is laid down in the Soviet Constitution (Article 119) that every worker in the Soviet Union must be given a minimum of a fortnight’s holiday with full pay. Many people, such as teachers, doctors, actors, and musicians, have a month’s holiday, and occasionally longer.

To a certain extent holidays have been staggered in the Soviet Union for many years. The summer holiday season

begins in March and ends in October ; for on the shores of the Black Sea or in some of the Asiatic lands, March is already summer, while October is still warm enough for sunbathing. Winter sports enthusiasts take their holidays in the winter, as do those who want a hunting holiday in the northern forests, or on the mountain slopes.

The majority of people begin to think about holidays in February or March. Many families will plan to go away in family parties to the country, where villagers take in guests, generally without board. The children may stay for the three summer months of the school holiday. Elsewhere there are bungalows or cottages put up by a co-operative society that visitors can rent. A family holiday is much the same the world over. Mother wants mushrooms for breakfast, or not so far off, in the woods, there may be masses of wild strawberries, which are delicious, and other berries of which Russians are very fond. There are daily fruit-gathering expeditions, the results of which mother turns into jam. She often forgets that she is supposed to be on holiday.

If there is a stream nearby, or even a pond, there is bathing and swimming, and there are always those who set out hopefully for the day with the fishing-rod. The visitors will join the country children in many of their activities.

There are hundreds of varieties of fish in Russian rivers and lakes, and fishing is taken seriously by the adult enthusiast, who may catch salmon, or sturgeon, or carp, or smaller fish. Collective farms are encouraged to make lakes on their land and stock them with fish. The same "fishy" tales are told in the Soviet Union as in Britain ! Other people may spend their holiday duck shooting or snipe shooting ; for there is a great deal of game to be had in the Soviet Union. Shooting large animals for pleasure is very strictly controlled. Soviet authorities are anxious to preserve all their different species and as in Africa there are great animal preserves covering thousands of square miles.

Russians are very sociable people, and they enjoy holidays spent with others, as some English people do at Holiday

Fellowship centres or Butlin's camps. Every trade union and professional union has its holiday homes, either by the sea or in the country. The medical workers, that is doctors, nurses, etc., have their holiday home, the Red Army have theirs ; textile workers, builders, coal-miners, all have either acquired a fine old mansion or their unions have built equally fine new ones. There are still not enough holiday centres for all who wish to go to them, so that priority is given to the best workers or to those needing a holiday for health reasons. Many receive their holiday in these homes as a reward for good work. The rest pay in accordance with their incomes.

Visitors to these holiday homes elect their entertainment committee, which arranges for sports for those who want them, for concerts and amateur dramatics, and for lectures for those who think them part of a holiday. Picnics are very popular, as are swimming and sunbathing. There is always a doctor on the staff, who arranges the diet and advises where necessary.

Intourist, the tourist organization, has an increasing number of hotels and hostels, and tours are often arranged by the staff committee at the place where one works. Both train and air travel are very cheap, and long distances can be covered at little cost. All students get twenty-five per cent or more reduction on travel tickets. The more enterprising go off hiking, carrying tents and other gear with them ; they cook their food over a fire by a river bank or in a wood.

As mentioned earlier, mountaineering is becoming increasingly popular. Students and factory and farm workers will spend much time planning for a mountaineering holiday.

It is common for country people to spend their holidays in the capital cities, where there are special clubs and hostels for those who desire to stay in them rather than in hotels.

To the holiday homes, rest homes, and sanatoria parents generally go without their children. The latter have their own holiday homes, called Pioneer Camps, as well as rest homes and sanatoria, which are generally run by the Commissariat of Health or by a Health Department. The Pioneer Camps are

mostly run by trade and professional unions for the children of their members.

About two million boys and girls from the cities of the R.S.F.S.R. alone spent from three to six weeks in these camps during the summer of 1944. The number was less in peace-time because more went away with their parents. During the war children gave invaluable help to the farmers instead of having their usual camp holidays.

Pioneer camps are not really camps but may be large old houses or new buildings. Children under thirteen sleep in bedrooms or dormitories, not under canvas. Music of all kinds, acting, dancing, games and sports easily fill the day. Much of the organizing is done by the committees of senior boys or girls elected by all the members. Picnics, expeditions, camp-fire evenings, all help to make the holiday interesting and the time pass swiftly, while helping the farmers with their work or entertainments brings added satisfaction. The wall newspaper, too, both as a diary of activities and as a literary and artistic effort, is essential. Village children will often be taken for a tour of industrial cities during their holidays.

### SUNDAYS AND FREE EVENINGS

A favourite way of spending a free evening in the big cities is to have dinner in a well-known restaurant. A very good orchestra or jazz band supplies music for those who enjoy dancing between courses. At about midnight a good concert party will arrive. It might be a gipsy concert party, singing real gipsy songs (which are nothing like the popular idea of them), or giving gipsy dances, which appear to consist chiefly in stamping about, the men slapping their thighs, and the women being twirled round very fast.

But Russians are also fond of visiting one another. Over light refreshments or a leisurely meal, they talk the evening away, play chess or dominoes, or have music.

In Samarkand or Tashkent, Stalinabad or Alma-Ata, the Asian republics, the Chai-khana, or open-air tea gardens, are very popular. The old Asiatic tradition of keeping women

away from men, indoors, still persists in some places. The people who sit cross-legged on the beautiful rugs spread on the ground in a Chai-khana are nearly all men. They smoke hookahs, drink endless cups of tea, held in beautiful silver filigree holders, and gossip. Now and then a serious discussion may arise. On another occasion, a folk-bard may appear, like the Kazakh Naûsha Bukeikhanov. To the accompaniment of his native instrument, the dombra, he sings of the horse and horse-racing, of the Kazakh steppe, old legends, and songs about the new life. The dombra is a stringed instrument the shape of a pear cut in half, with a long neck, two strings, and about fifteen frets (the slits through which the sound comes). Only a very gifted player makes this instrument sound attractive to European ears.

### CLUBS

Clubs play a great part in Soviet life. Only the very smallest factory or the poorest and most inefficient collective farm is without a club. A big works, employing 5000 or more workers, will have magnificent premises. The club will have its own theatre, which is often used for large meetings or lectures. There will be a concert hall, a gymnasium, and, naturally, a large dining-hall. Every club has a library and a large one will have a reading-room in addition. Then there are rooms for different activities. The Russians are encouraged not only to admire and appreciate professional performances, but to be performers themselves, to be active creators as well as listeners.

The large central clubs have separate sections for the children of their members, and youngsters can be busy and happy without being a nuisance to adults or being worried by them.

Like the adults, children have their clubs, called Pioneer Palaces if they are the central clubs, and Pioneer Houses if they are smaller, district ones. Moscow has a Pioneer Palace and seventeen Pioneer Houses. The Pioneer Palaces are just as fine as the central adult club. They cater for children from

six to eighteen years old. Any one can become a member as long as there is room. There is no fee. The new member is given two weeks in which to make up his mind what circle he wants to join. Once having joined a circle, he is expected to stay in it for at least a year. Senior members elect a committee, which elects a chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. The committee is in very great measure responsible for order and good behaviour. The different circles elect their own prefects. This does not apply to the under-elevens, where the prefect is appointed by the instructor. In a club of two thousand children the only adults seen about the place were instructors, or leaders, who are all highly qualified professional people. Boys and girls can engage in every imaginable kind of activity. The necessary materials, tools, and equipment are all provided.

In addition to these Pioneer Palaces and Houses, which are smaller and very modest buildings, schoolchildren have their own special technical clubs for those with an inventive turn of mind. For those interested in plants and animals there are Young Naturalists' Parks, where they can, for instance, experiment by grafting raspberry cane on to a gooseberry bush, and watch the result, or produce a plant that grows potatoes underneath and tomatoes on top. Boys and girls interested in boats or trains can spend their free time or holiday manning boats of various kinds or running trains where these exist. There are at present twelve children's railways, run entirely by young people under instruction. The carriages are big enough to travel in. Similarly, there are a number of children's fleets.

All these Pioneer Palaces and clubs are closely linked with school. Bad work or bad behaviour in school may bring as a punishment exclusion from a club for any length of time.

These clubs are to be found in every large city or rural centre, north or south, east or west. They seem to be some of the best run organizations.

In addition to these special clubs there are school clubs on school premises.

## ENTERTAINMENTS

Soviet people are fond of the theatre and they go very frequently. Moscow's forty theatres are always full. They are run somewhat differently from British theatres. All theatres are the responsibility of the Commission for the Arts, a State Commission. A theatre has its permanent theatrical and technical staff. The director, his assistants, producers, conductor and orchestra, the actors, designers, stage-hands, dressmakers, and carpenters, all are permanent members of a theatre, just as a school staff are permanent members of that school. They are paid salaries, like civil servants, have their hours of work per day, in normal conditions six hours, and a month's holiday in the summer. This makes it possible to plan a theatre's production and to give the necessary time for rehearsals.

All kinds of plays may be seen in a Soviet theatre : Russian classics, modern Soviet plays, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and English plays. Shakespeare is very popular. His plays may be seen in about thirty or forty different towns. He has been translated into a great many of the languages of the Soviet Union and a great Shakespeare Festival is held every year.

The ballet is presented in Moscow with a perfection not to be found anywhere else. Ballet dancers begin their training at about the age of seven. In 1943 there were six hundred professional theatre and ballet companies playing in the Soviet Union.

Music plays a very important part in Soviet life, with classical music having the chief place.

In normal times, theatres and concert halls close down in the capital cities for June, July, and August. Their companies then tour the Union, visiting small cities in every part of that vast country, collective and State farms, and the new Arctic ports.

In this way people in places remote from the capital cities have an opportunity to see first-class productions and their local companies receive help from the visitors.

Cinemas are generally much cheaper than in Britain, and seats are cheaper than in the theatres.

In cinema, theatre, or concert hall, nobody is allowed to go in once the show has begun. In theatre and concert hall the visitor must wait until the interval ; in the cinema he must wait until the film has ended. Smoking is not allowed. Theatres and cinemas have large lounges in which those who come early can amuse themselves. Often the management provides a concert or arranges a dance. The only extra charge is for refreshment, which in peace-time can be had in great variety.

All seats can be booked, so that there is no waiting in queues.

Not every Soviet citizen prefers classical music or serious drama or opera. Some prefer the music-hall or circus, and there are institutes for training circus performers and music-hall artists.

#### THEATRES FOR YOUTH

There is a law that says children under sixteen may not go to an adult performance at a theatre or a cinema. The authorities therefore provide special theatres and cinemas to which boys and girls may go at a time suitable for them. There is a special theatre in Leningrad that sends out companies to play to young people in the Arctic Circle. For the very young there are the puppet theatres. Fairy-tales and adventure plays are very popular with the younger boys and girls.

The audience can and does criticize a play, the producer, and the actors. Some or all of the company will sometimes meet their audience to discuss the production. The Theatres for Youth, as they are called, also have their lounges, where games may be played, and the buffet sells refreshments. The favourite refreshment is ice-cream. Naturally, not every citizen goes to the theatre, cinema or concert hall, nor does a person spend every evening at a place of entertainment. Many stay at home, while others like to spend some leisure

hours in a library reading-room, browsing among books. In some Asiatic cities, like Bokhara in Uzbekistan, the library has an open-air reading-room attached to it. Museums, picture galleries and exhibitions attract many people, particularly from the country.



*S.C.R. Photo*

**OPEN-AIR READING-ROOM IN BURYAT-MONGOLIA**  
The thirst for knowledge is met everywhere. The open-air reading-room in Mogotui Machine and Tractor Station is well patronized.

World War II led to the development of interest in allotments as a hobby as well as a necessity and by 1944 the number of allotment-holders had risen to fifteen million. In the cities people live in flats, as is the practice on the continent, and there are no private gardens there.

Plenty of ways of occupying his leisure are open to the Soviet citizen, but he is not obliged to make use of any of them. He is free to choose the way to spend his leisure, fruitfully or fruitlessly.

#### CHAPTER NINE

### THE SOVIET CITIZEN READS

**A**LL over the world children like books. In the Soviet Union there are a variety of ways of encouraging the reading habit. Sometimes they use the "Punch and Judy"

show : instead of showing Punch knocking out the policeman, he is shown as getting into all kinds of difficulties because he cannot read. Then the play shows how much pleasanter life is when he learns to read.

In Moscow there is a central Museum of Children's Books, with exhibits in the form of a Quiz that may be handled. This museum has a travelling section, which tours the whole country to encourage people to grow up with an interest in books.

#### PAPERS

What do Russians read ? The answer might be, everything according to their ages. First, there is the newspaper. The custom of having one's newspapers left at the house does not yet obtain in the Soviet Union. That is a luxury for which the country has so far been unable to spare labour. Papers are sold at kiosks or booths, and every morning and evening people may be seen lined up in queues to buy them. The issue of papers has increased more than tenfold since 1913, from 859 newspapers with a daily circulation of 2,700,000 copies, to 8550 with a daily circulation of 47,520,000, but there are still not enough papers. The outbreak of war in 1941 led to a great addition of army newspapers and journals.

There are two famous national daily papers. *Pravda* (Truth) has a 2,000,000 circulation, and *Izvestia* (Gazette) has a 1,600,000 circulation. All the republics and many national regions publish their own national paper in addition, just as we have the provincial as well as the national papers. But the vast area of the Soviet Union includes peoples speaking different languages, and because of this newspapers are published in over seventy different languages.

Cities of capital importance, such as Moscow, Leningrad, Tbilisi or Minsk, Samarkand or Frunze, have their own papers. The Red Army and Red Navy, and the various trade and professional unions, have each their own special paper. *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), the Army paper, is a famous one.

To deal with more specialized information in a more serious



RUSSIAN WOMAN SEA PILOT

way, there are nearly 2000 periodicals, which cover such subjects as : education, science, music, the theatre, architecture, and so on. These periodicals are read by many of the general public as well as by the specialists.

The lighter side of life is found in a humorous weekly paper, *Krokodil* (Crocodile), which has very good cartoons—and regards no one and nothing as sacred.

*Ogonyok* (The Little Fire), one of the oldest weeklies in the Red Army, has, in addition to serious short articles, stories, poems, cartoons, and skits. The daily papers always include either short stories or poems, and often both.

#### BOOKS

The visitor to the U.S.S.R. will miss "thrillers." Russian taste has not followed in that direction. Adventure stories are popular, some of them centering round Soviet life, but the taste for crime "thrillers" Russians find somewhat difficult to understand.

Bookstalls display a great variety of technical books. There is keen interest in the latest scientific discoveries and new industrial methods in the U.S.S.R. and abroad and people

readily buy books to help them with their work ; one notices in trains and buses that most of the books being read are technical ones.

Many well-known books written by authors of other nations have been translated into Russian, but naturally the Soviet citizen, in his pleasure reading, turns first to his own literature. The favourite Russian author is probably Gorki (1868-1935). He was one of the world's great writers ; he wrote with deep understanding, mostly of the lives of the poor and oppressed, and insisted that all human beings had something fine and noble in them—the divine spark—and that it was bad conditions that made them ignoble. As well as great novels, such as *Mother*, which has been translated into English, Gorki wrote many fine plays, of which a famous one is *The Lower Depths*.

A list of Russian authors is not very interesting, but some of the outstanding ones are worth remembering. There is Krylov, famous for his fables ; as open criticism was not allowed under the Tsars, Krylov and other authors wrote fables and satires, under cover of which they criticized very severely the cruelty and oppression of the regime and the corruption and stupidity of officials. Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852) also used this method in his famous novel *Dead Souls*, in which he satirizes the landowners and merchants ; this, too, has been translated and published in Britain. Two other authors of world fame are Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov. Tolstoy's best known work is *War and Peace*, a very long novel in which he describes the horrors that the Russians suffered as a result of Napoleon's invasion. Tolstoy was a great moralist, and his books, while often exciting, openly criticized the Tsar's rule. So popular and so highly respected was Tolstoy throughout the world, that he was the only man the Tsar did not dare to exile or imprison for his opinions.

Chekhov (1861-1904) was a brilliant writer of plays and short stories. His stories particularly are full of wit and often very humorous. His plays are often acted in Britain.

Since 1917 there have appeared a great many Soviet writers.

Some of them, such as Sholokhov, who wrote *And Quiet Flows the Don*, and Alexei Tolstoy\* (nothing to do with Leo Tolstoy) who recently finished *The Road to Calvary*, are very well known outside the U.S.S.R.

Of the poets, the most beloved and the most widely read is Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837). He is to the U.S.S.R. what Shakespeare is to Britain. Industrial workers, peasants and schoolchildren, as well as intellectual workers, enjoy reading Pushkin, and no one is surprised at the frequency with which he is quoted in widely different circles. Like another great Russian poet, Lermontov, who was some years younger than he, Pushkin was killed in a duel engineered by the enemies of free speech and progress.

After the Soviet Revolution, the poet Mayakovsky used his poetic gifts and fiery energy to stir up the people to work and fight for their newly won rights and liberties. He would stand on an improvised platform in the open air and, facing a great multitude of people, recite his stirring verse to them. He believed that poets should take part in the daily struggle, and if rhymed couplets or posters were required for a great cause then the poet should endeavour to meet the need. One of his greatest poems is called *Lenin*.

In addition to modern Russian writers and poets, there are the Soviet writers and poets of the other nationalities. The Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Bashkiria, and all the others have their own native authors and poets. As Russian books are translated into the languages of these nationalities, their books are, of course, translated into Russian.

#### FOREIGN LITERATURE

As we in Britain read translations of foreign books, so do Soviet people similarly enjoy, through translations, the writers of other nations. Foreign literature forms part of the literature syllabus for fifth and sixth forms in all the secondary schools. A Sixth Form in Moscow showed me photographs of the scene from *Twelfth Night* which they had produced the previous term, and gave me a copy of their programme for

\*He died in 1945

the Byron anniversary they had celebrated. Their syllabus had included works of Scott and Dickens, of Molière, Victor Hugo, and others from France, and German and Spanish literature. These books are translated into many Soviet languages besides Russian. The Moscow children wanted to know about Russian writers studied in British secondary schools.

### OWNING BOOKS

The Russians are great buyers of books, and reprints of the classics or of a good new book will sometimes be sold out in a few weeks. Books are cheap, and it is a widespread ambition to possess a library of one's own, even if it is only a small bookcase full. It is quite common to see an industrial worker or a peasant who has had a rise or bonus go off to buy books with it.

### LIBRARIES

It is, however, impossible for individuals to have all the books they may like to read or consult, and like other countries the Soviet Union has public libraries, central and local ones, and club, factory and school libraries. There are two very famous ones, the State Lenin Library in Moscow, housed in a new building admired by foreign architects, and the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, with a long history, named after a Ukrainian writer, in Leningrad. Each may be compared to the British Museum Library.

On a collective farm the library reading-room is a hive of collective activity. Newspapers are read aloud to a group of people and then discussed, and books, too, are often read aloud. Lectures on various matters, relating to the farm, or to matters of national and international importance, are given here. The library reading-room in a village community is a most valuable means of keeping in touch with the capital cities and with the latest advances in every sphere of life.

Travelling libraries visit isolated places to serve the people who live far from a town, and these, too, hold discussions.

In the summer, branch libraries and reading-rooms are set

up in the parks in towns, so that reading may be encouraged in the fresh air. All libraries are free, and books may be read there or taken home. Library assistants discuss books and advise readers about them.

### CHILDREN'S BOOKS

There is a special Publishing House for children's books, called the Molodaya Gvardia Publishing House. Since 1935 the Komsomol Youth Organization has been in charge of publishing children's books, and the first books they issued on taking over were fairy tales. In large cities there are special children's bookshops, with low counters and shelves, in addition to children's departments in the ordinary shops. The assistants are specially trained to advise the young customers, and to discuss authors with them. The habit of buying books is widespread among children as well as adults.

Children's books begin with tiny ones about two inches square, made up of gaily coloured pictures, each with a little rhyme below or on the page opposite. These, like the larger picture books, are popular with the small children who cannot read. Rhymes and jingles and children's poems are to be had in great variety, attractively illustrated. Some of them are on the lines of Chesterton's *Cautionary Tales*. Chukovsky, one of the best loved children's poets, is very clever at these cautionary poems. A very well-known one is called "Moi do Dir," and describes the unpleasant experiences of the boy who wouldn't wash.

Another great favourite with the children is the poet Marshak. There are story books in great variety for every age, adventure stories, including books about national heroes, being specially popular. The exploring of the Arctic, flying across the North Pole, the building of new cities by young volunteers, tracking and hunting animals, are fine subjects for tales of modern adventure ; and the fliers, the explorers, and the men and women who overcame great obstacles in the building of a great dam or factory are among the popular heroes and heroines. Then there are exciting stories of the

Civil War, tales of heroism and daring, and hairbreadth escapes. In the last few years historical novels are being widely read. And, of course, stories about school life are popular.

There are foreign writers who are very popular with Soviet youth : as for example, Kipling, for his *Jungle Books*, *Just So Stories*, and *Kim* ; *Gulliver's Travels* is widely known and loved, and Scott, Dickens, Fennimore Cooper, Henty, and Jack London are favourites with the boys and girls, as are stories by various other European and American authors. These are translated into non-Russian languages too.

Boys and girls have their own daily paper, *Pionerskaya Pravda*. This has articles similar to those in the adults' paper, but they are written more simply ; they deal with both national and international affairs. There is, too, a section for competitions, and another for games and puzzles, with generally a short story or poem. A page is devoted to news of Pioneer activities in different parts of the country.

In addition to this paper, there is a periodical called *Molodaya Gvardia*—The Young Guard. This has true adventure stories, articles about Soviet life, and poems. There is a "How To Do It" feature, which tells readers how to make various things, and a humorous illustrated page. Nearly everything in the journal is illustrated. Here, too, there is a section for competitions, puzzles, and games.

In the last ten years all reading matter for young people has been well printed, on good paper, and well illustrated, and prices are low.

School libraries are very important. A secondary school in any part of the Soviet Union may have a library of from five to twenty thousand books, with a full-time librarian and sometimes a voluntary assistant. The children's public libraries have reading-rooms where boys and girls may sit and read. In the summer a large number of children's libraries go to the parks and gardens as already mentioned.

It must not be imagined that every one of the 193 million Soviet citizens likes reading. Among such a vast population

there are bound to be both adults and youngsters who are not interested in books, just as there are places where libraries are poor. The educated Russians have always been great readers, now that education in the Soviet Union is universal, reading is becoming universal, too. Soviet people read for different reasons, some for pleasure only, some for pleasure and profit, and some chiefly because it will help them in their work.

## CHAPTER TEN

## THE SOVIET CITIZEN PLAYS GAMES

WE do not hear so much of Russian sport. Most of the visitors to the Soviet Union and the writers about the Soviet Union appear to be too much taken up with industrial giants, with scientific developments, or, if they are artists, with the theatre and ballet, to visit the Dynamo Stadium when a first-class football match is in progress. They would be astonished to find the leaders with whom they had been discussing social questions packed in here with a swaying crowd



RUSSIAN FOOTBALLERS

of 100,000 spectators, enthusiastically cheering their favourite team.

One of my acquaintances is director of an important school and institute. He is as great a football fan as any to be found in Britain. When there is a first-class match in Moscow, he locks his door, tells his secretary he is engaged for the day, and goes off to take his seat in the stadium. He told me that the reason why he wants to come to England is to see a Cup Final. I hope he will some day.

Soviet authorities know very well that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," whether he is called Jack or Ivan or Henri, it is all the same. They know that some of the play must be physical play, for two reasons: first, because it gives the people pleasure; and second, because it helps to keep them fit. So games and sport are very much encouraged.

But because in the old days there were hardly any facilities for sport for the ordinary people (though any one could skate in winter), and because it was not encouraged among the people, as well as for other reasons, it doesn't have the importance in the Soviet Union that it has in Great Britain. There is no professional sport. There are, of course, professional instructors, who receive good salaries. The Special Committee for Physical Culture has many Institutes, increasing yearly, where specialist instructors are trained.

#### CHILDREN'S GAMES

The term "games" covers as many varieties of activities in the Soviet Union as it does in Britain—probably more, because of the many varied nationalities.

Out of doors, in the courtyard, the first thing we notice is a group of young children at play. These courtyards, of various sizes, round which blocks of flats are grouped, are safe playgrounds, summer and winter, for the young children, when there is no one free to take them to the parks or squares.

Katya, Vanya and Tanya hold their breath as little Masha stops wobbling on her sturdy right leg in square 4, and lands on both feet, astride, in square 5 and 6. Her confidence is

restored, and she hops on her right foot again in square 7, twists round, back into 5 and 6 with legs apart, now facing the anxious faces of the other members of her side. 8, 9, 10, 11—hop, hop, hop, hop—fiercely concentrating—and out of the chalked hopscotch pitch.

Katya and Tanya and Vanya are laughing excitedly.

"Jolly good, Masha. Jolly good. Two of our side have done it. Now it is your turn, Naida."

The captain of the other side hops into square 1. 2, 3, 4, astride, 7 and turn, astride, 8, 9, 10, 11 and out. Misha next. He goes leaping up the course, but turns to number 7 with such agility that he lands with one foot out of the pitch altogether.

"Hard luck, Misha. You are out." cries Naida. "Now Kolya."

Kolya hops into square 1, with a very determined expression. He has no intention of failing through over-confidence. Now he has turned. He is coming back. 10, 11 and out.

Now it is Pavlik's turn. The honour of his side depends on him. If he hops successfully his, Naida's, Vanya's, and Misha's, is the winning side, but if he hops on the chalk line or overbalances, then the result is an unsatisfactory "tie."

1, 2, 3, 4. All the children watch with bated breath. 5 and 6. There is a dreadful moment at 7, when Pavlik, who has already turned slightly, swings his arms in an effort to keep his balance. He turns quickly, however, and is back in 5 and 6. There he is, 10, 11 and out.

They all pat him on the back.

"Good old Pavlik. I thought you were going over."

On the grass space specially reserved for children beside thoroughfares in large cities, we see some kind of ball game in progress. As we draw near, the ball, which appears to be somewhat smaller than a cricket ball, comes hurtling towards us, with a boy in hot pursuit. He snatches it from the ground some ten yards away and hurls it towards the group of players. Some of them are cheering excitedly, and a good many of them seem to be running about.

Coming closer, we can follow the game better. It is a team game and the members of one team appear to be posted at intervals roughly round the circumference of a circle. In the middle of the circle is another member, who is the bowler, and opposite her stands one of the players for the other side, who is batting. Behind the batsman crouches the wicket keeper.

The bowler tosses the ball through the air to the batsman, who hits it away to his left, and runs as hard as he can to the first post.

Why, we know this game !

"It is rounders," we exclaim.

It is "lapta" to the Russians, but there seem to be only minor differences between lapta and rounders. The Americans have taken this game, speeded it up, enlarged the small leather-covered stick which is the bat and the small leather-covered rather soft ball, and made it their national game of "baseball."

Hopscotch and rounders (or lapta) ! and a little further off a skipping contest ! There is not really very much difference between the way in which British children and Russian children enjoy themselves.

Off on our search for games we go into another courtyard. What looks like a badminton net is suspended some feet above the ground. Children are tossing a netball to and fro across the net with amazing swiftness. The game is called Volley Ball and is very popular. It is played by older boys and girls and students.

A shout attracts us through an alleyway into a courtyard. Here youngsters are playing ball games, with an ordinary rubber ball, each movement becoming more complicated than the last, catching with one arm behind, throwing it round the leg, and so on, very much in the way British children play.

On many occasions when there has been a player short I have been called into a game : "Auntie, come and play. It's a good game." Everybody is called Auntie or Uncle—*Tyotya* or *Dyadya* in Russian—by young Soviet children. They probably know that it is much harder to refuse anything when one is called Auntie or Uncle.

Some senior boys and girls join us. They look rather hot, but happy. They have been playing tennis, and it has been a very close game. Liza and Alexei are challenging Marussya and Sergei to a return match to-morrow, and amid much laughter, they are promising that the final score will be very different.

Alexei is the leader of the school team. They are all very keen on matches, and are enthusiastic about the Schools' Sports Association, which was formed in 1942. They think having membership cards, with rules and regulations and a membership fee will make sport in schools more important than it has been. They particularly want team games encouraged. It will be easier too through the Sports Association to get a place in the Sports' Schools for youth. But their hopes that in the Sports' Schools, which boys or girls can enter at the age of twelve if they are particularly good, there will be less history and literature and science will be disappointed. A sports instructor or instructress is expected to have as good a general education as any other specialist.

In the Gorki Park of Rest and Culture in Moscow on any summer day we can see a variety of games and sports going on. This is a vast park through which flows the River Moskva, where the small children have their own section called the Children's City. Those figures in shorts and singlets flitting hither and thither turn out to be footballers, obviously beginners. Football is a summer game in the Soviet Union, because the snow and ice make it impossible to play in the winter.

Not far away, youngsters are learning wrestling and boxing, and some of them look as though they will make good. Here is a group of older girls and boys, dressed in white, carrying visors and rapiers. If we follow them we find they are members of the fencing club of the Moscow Pioneer Palace. They have been challenged by the fencing club of the Pioneer Palace in far-off Sverdlovsk, who thought the Muscovites were getting too swelled-headed and required putting in their place. The Muscovites have made up their minds to teach the Sverdlovites a thing or two.

From round the corner come shouts of laughter. We join the crowd to find out the cause. A plank of wood is precariously balanced on a large stone. In the centre stands a girl of twenty or so, holding her right arm outstretched with the palm at right angles to her body. She challenges anyone to come on to the plank, smack her hand as hard as possible and upset her balance. Here they come : a swaggering young man, a cautious older man, a sprightly sporty-looking young woman. One after another they hit and lose their balance, and fall off in an undignified heap. We learn that this has been going on for an hour. But wait, here's sixteen-year-old Petya, whose hobby is physics and who is particularly interested in balances. He has been watching the show for some time, judging and measuring. Now he's on the plank. Quite a light tap and over goes the girl, to the cheers of the audience.

"Phew!" says Petya, "it's quite easy. You just have to know your physics and have a good eye. That's all."

Along the river there are what are called water-stations—separate ones for young people. Here there is every kind of provision for water sports, including water-polo. Swimming is popular with all Russians and all through the summer there are great battles for championships. In 1938 the world's speed champion was the Soviet swimmer Boichenko, who is famous for his butterfly stroke.

On the river, too, people are seen sculling and rowing. Speed boats and yachts are to be found in the wide river estuaries and on the broad lakes.

On one of the many islands that dot the Dnipro river by Kiev, the boys and girls had, until the Germans destroyed it, a boating club. Here they built their own boats, as well as repaired old ones. Here they could stay the whole day and the night too when a storm made it too dangerous to return. When I was there in 1938 they were putting up pavilions. The whole place was run by the boys and girls with an adult supervisor (not always there) and an adult instructor.

Perhaps the most popular sport for the last ten years has been parachute jumping. The parachute towers in the parks are always surrounded by eager crowds of young people. No one under twelve years is allowed to jump even from the



S.C.R. Photo

#### PARACHUTE JUMPING TOWER

The most popular sport in the U.S.S.R. is Parachute Jumping. This is a tower from which the experienced jump.

lowest tower and everyone is medically examined and weighed before receiving permission. Vanya, who is too fond of pastries and is known by the nickname "the stuffer," will have to go on a slimming diet before he is allowed to jump, while Tolya is refused permission because his heart is not quite strong. A young parachutist has to go through a period of severe training and pass a very strict test.

Summer is the great time for sports meets or "olympiads," as they are called in Russia. Athletics as distinct from sports are very popular. At an athletics Olympiad, there will be much running, for distance and for speed, jumping, high and width jumps, vaulting, obstacle racing, javelin throwing, discus throwing, weight-lifting, gymnastics, everything may be seen. Young people have their sports competitions in their own stadiums. All those who pass certain tests for speed, skill, endurance and initiative, receive a badge bearing the Russian letters TTO—which stand for "Ready for Labour and Defence." There is the same badge for adults for harder tests.

### WINTER SPORTS

Winter is a greater favourite with young people in the Soviet than summer. First of all there is the making of snowmen, snowmen which last for weeks or months. Then there is tobogganing. Wherever there is a slope, a run is made by the youngsters. With the first frost out come the toboggans to be cleaned and repaired if necessary. They range from the simplest home-made ones, to quite elaborate ones, beautifully made by a father or an uncle who is a skilled craftsman. A toboggan full of youngsters provides the greatest enjoyment, particularly if it capsizes in the snow.

Skating comes a very close second in popularity. The trouble here is that not nearly enough skates are produced as yet. A pair of skates is a highly valued sports prize or school prize. There is much cajoling of relations in engineering or metal works to produce a pair of skates, and "swapping" in school is as frequent as in British schools. Ski-ing follows close on the heels of skating in popularity. Sports equipment factories in peace time produced tens of thousands of pairs of skis, from tiny ones for six-year-olds to those required for Army use.

Out for a walk in winter one may meet a teacher with five or six youngsters from the kindergarten carrying their skis, off to the nearest place outside the city or to the park, where they will be given a lesson in ski-ing.

In the winter there are great cross-country ski runs. Champions have done two and three thousand mile ski runs. Ski-ing is very popular with young collective farmers, men and women, and often several thousand take part in a ski run in one region.

One must not forget the sports of mountaineering and hiking and Arctic exploring. The Soviet Union possesses the highest mountain in Europe, Elbruz in the Caucasus range, and some of the highest in the world in the Tien Shan range. There are lower ones for beginners in the Altai range. Trade Unions and Professional Unions have their Alpine Clubs. On the mountains they have built modern chalets where climbers can have hot baths, food and sleep, as well as entertainment.

Every summer holiday parties of alpinists, factory workers, peasants, students, professional workers of every kind, go off for a climbing holiday. There are numberless peaks as yet unconquered to ascend, glaciers, as yet untrod by man, to traverse. Anyone who loves danger and excitement and has a cool head can get his or her fill of both.

Every holiday season hundreds of parties set off on hiking or exploring tours. So much of the Soviet Union is still undiscovered that any one who wishes may be a Dr. Livingstone. The different unions have their own tourist bases (hostels or clubs we should call them) all over the country. Many are still primitive, while others are very comfortable.

Arctic exploring is one of the most exciting kinds of exploration. The Arctic Exploration Clubs in Pioneer palaces and schools spend months preparing for their miniature expeditions.

In addition to sports and games that are general for the whole Soviet Union, there are those which are peculiar to each of the national regions. In the Don area the Cossacks are famous for their horsemanship; their fame has spread over the whole world. Even young Cossacks perform the most astonishing feats on horseback at special "meets" for championships. In some of the Asian regions they are famed for

their own particular kind of wrestling in addition to horse-manship.

The Soviet Government had to carry out, and is still carrying out, an enormous building programme to make all this sport possible. In 1940 there were 650 stadiums, some of which hold as many as 100,000 spectators, 7200 athletic fields, 350 water "stations," 2700 ski-ing stations, 100 institutes and centres for training physical instructors, 2713 large gymnasias, children's sports schools, and so on.

Despite all this provision and encouragement, there are yet many people, as in other countries, who are not very interested in sport, who never go to watch a match of any kind, who ceased playing games when they left school. Yet it was this physical training through sport and athletics that helped to make the soldiers of the Red Army and the workers behind the lines tough and strong during the war.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN IN CONCLUSION

A LECTURER on the U.S.S.R. is often asked "Would you like to go and live there?" That seems a very odd question. A country should be judged by whether the people are the kind with whom one can have friendship and co-operation on all those numerous subjects which affect relations between nations. It should be judged by the way it behaves in an emergency. It should be judged by its achievements in the sciences and in the arts, by its achievements in improving life for the *whole* of its people. It should be judged by whether it progresses towards freedom or away from it.

It is the right and proper thing for Britons to prefer living in Britain, Americans in America, Frenchmen in France, Chinese in China, and so on. If the U.S.A. or France were the kind of country in which the majority of Britons would like to live permanently, it would mean either that Britain had ceased to be British or that the U.S.A. or France had ceased

to be American or French. Different geographical, climatic, and historical conditions have given rise to different ways of thought, customs, and habits, which are right for the country of origin but would be wrong if transplanted to another country. So, while visits to other countries are highly desirable, to judge a country by the test "Would I like to live there?" would lead to misunderstanding rather than to understanding.

This applies very much to the Soviet Union. When we are discussing the lives of our friends in the Soviet Union, we must keep in mind their history, geography, and climate. A study of world history shows that at different periods there have been violent breaks with the past, and that different countries took the lead along new paths at different times. It was always a painful process. Russia's history placed her in such a position that a violent upheaval was inevitable. It came in 1917. It was unfortunate that the wise statesmanship of Russia's early rulers, such as Yaroslav the Wise, Ivan III and IV, Peter the Great, and others, was not emulated by the later Tsars. It was unfortunate that Russian scholars and inventors and explorers, like the world-famous mathematician Lobachevsky, the botanist Timiryazev, or one of the earliest inventors of flying, Zhukovsky, were cramped and hindered by the Tsars and often persecuted for their opinions: It was unfortunate that under the last two Tsars all those liberal-minded and public-spirited men and women of all classes, who risked and suffered exile, imprisonment and death, were not allowed to meet openly for the discussion of reforms. While early in its history Russia, judged by the standards of the time, was a progressive country, late in its history, in the nineteenth century, it became one of the most reactionary and backward countries, and with a vast poverty-stricken peasantry.

When, in 1918, the Bolshevik government took over the rule of the country, they were faced with problems that had long since ceased to exist in other countries. The violent break that preceded the march along the new path was very painful. For many years the Soviet Union was surrounded

by unfriendly nations, giving her no help in her fight to bring the whole of Russia to a more highly civilized level of life. She has achieved the task successfully but at great cost. As already mentioned, in the first years of planning, the people went short of food and of warmth. They were badly clothed and worse housed. The health of many suffered for years afterwards, as in a lesser degree will be the case after World War II. Many Russians were hostile and deliberately carried out acts of destruction, sometimes even of murder ; from them severe penalties were exacted. But there were a sufficient number of people with faith to carry the country along. To-day, the younger generation, which knew not that terrible struggle, gives thanks to that valiant older generation, which was prepared to die that their children might live free and happy. In the worst days of World War II, conditions were never as bad as in the early period after 1918 ; and after the first three years of the War, which took from the Soviet Union her grain lands, her main coal, iron, and oil supplies, her sugar and other supplies, the Government has been able to improve the food, clothing, and housing of the people—not to the 1940 level, but well on the way. It has been able to restore the essential services and such additions as theatres, museums, and holiday homes for children, in the liberated area within a few months of the expulsion of the enemy. In the Ukraine a year after liberation, 22,000 school buildings were either wholly rebuilt or restored and 240 enterprises restored or rebuilt in Kharkov alone. And all the time the vast Red Army was fed, clothed, and supplied with munitions and weapons in unceasing numbers and of improved quality.

The great military achievements of the Red Army are the direct results of the achievements in education, in industry, in agriculture, in self-government. The greatest of all is the development of a new outlook on life. That has not come about easily. Not every Soviet citizen thinks first of the community and only second of himself. Not every Soviet citizen has grown out of the anti-social habits of shirking work, or slacking, or dishonesty. Take up a national or local paper

of any date, and side by side with praise there will be severe criticism, and exposure of individuals or organizations that have not done their duty or have been guilty of anti-social conduct. No one escapes this criticism or exposure, from a commissar downwards, and no one who does not remedy what has been wrong will remain in his or her position for long. More than one minister has lost his position because faults brought to light were not remedied. It is the Soviet citizen who is most critical of the failures, shortcomings, and back-slidings to be found in his country.

The world as a whole has owed great debts to different countries for different great achievements that have advanced the cause of humanity. In recent years, it has owed a debt to Britain for the Battle of Britain in 1940, when she alone kept Nazi Germany at bay while other democracies, not then in the War, prepared for the struggle, and for the sacrifices and work of her people in the fighting Services and in the homeland during six years of war ; it has owed a debt to the United States of America for her achievements in providing in enormous quantities vitally essential supplies and equipment for the struggle and later for the fine work of her fighting Services. The world owes to the Soviet Union a debt for being the first to destroy the myth of the invincibility of the Nazi army, and for the vital part she played in the Nazis' defeat ; and an equally great debt for showing that it is possible to organize production and distribution so as to abolish want and unemployment. The Hot Springs Conference, which met in the United States to consider the problems of feeding the world, and U.N.R.B.A., that international organization that began its work in liberated countries almost before the enemy had left them, owe much to the experience of planning in the Soviet Union.

There are still great and difficult tasks ahead of the Soviet citizen. Like all of us, he has still much to learn, and there is always room for improvement. In friendly co-operation with each other, learning from each other, we and the Russians can look to the future with confidence.

This is a short sketch of life in Soviet Russia. People will argue about Russian ways of life, as they do about those of, for instance, America. If this book has helped to stimulate curiosity, to give some idea of the Soviet peoples as folk, like ourselves, of real flesh and blood, with family ties and interests, laughter and tears, as well as daily work, and votes, then it will have served its intentionally limited purpose.

Those who wish to extend their knowledge of Russia will find the following books useful :—

<i>The Truth about Soviet Russia</i>	..	..	..	Webb.
<i>The Socialist Sixth of the World</i>	..	..	..	Johnson.
<i>Children of the Soviet Arctic</i>	..	..	..	Semushkin.
<i>Life in the U.S.S.R.</i>	..	..	..	King.
<i>Mission to Moscow</i>	..	..	..	Davies.
<i>Workers in the U.S.S.R.</i>	..	..	..	Rothstein.
<i>Everyday Life in Soviet Russia</i>	..	..	..	Malnik.
<i>Russian Families</i>	..	..	..	Binder.
<i>Moscow in the Making</i>	..	..	..	Simon.
<i>How the Soviet State is Run</i>	..	..	..	Sloan.
<i>Russian Cavalcade</i>	..	..	..	Carter.









